MAY MANN JENNINGS, FLORIDA'S GENTEEL ACTIVIST

By

LINDA DARLENE MOORE VANCE

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE COUNCIL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

1980

Copyright 1980

by

Linda Darlene Moore Vance

This dissertation is dedicated to

my family.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is indebted to many people for the completion of this work. First, to my children, who kept the pressure on by asking everyday for six years when "Momma" would be through with school and finished with her book; second, to the staff of the P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History at the University of Florida--Elizabeth Alexander, Ellen Hodges, and Steve Kerber--who were always helpful; third, to Dorothy Jennings Sandridge, who gave generously of her time and shared the Jennings family's papers, mementoes, and photographs; fourth, to my parents who financed the undertaking when funds ran low; and finally to Dr. Samuel Proctor, friend, mentor, and chairman of my doctoral committee.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

page

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... iv

ABSTRACT..... vii

CHAPTER

I "CRYSTAL GROVE" AND PAPA..... 1

Notes to Chapter I..... 17

II "BEYOND THE ALPS LIES ITALY"..... 20

Notes to Chapter II..... 41

III SHERMAN..... 44

Notes to Chapter III..... 71

IV THE GOVERNOR'S LADY..... 75

Notes to Chapter IV..... 111

V JACKSONVILLE, THE FEDERATION AND OTHER THINGS..... 114

Notes to Chapter V..... 142

VI " . . . AN ENTHUSIASTIC CLUBWOMAN"..... 145

Notes to Chapter VI..... 183

VII MADAM PRESIDENT AND THE OLD-GIRL NETWORK..... 186

Notes to Chapter VII..... 237

VIII A DEDICATED LIFE..... 240

Notes to Chapter VIII..... 267

IX DOCTOR MAY..... 271

Notes to Chapter IX..... 297

X "LOVER OF BEAUTY"..... 300

Notes to Chapter X..... 320

page

APPENDIX I "BEYOND THE ALPS LIES ITALY"..... 322

APPENDIX II LIST OF PRESIDENTS OF FFWC, 1895-1920.. 325

APPENDIX III LIST OF CLUBS IN FFWC..... 326

APPENDIX IV ANNUAL CONVENTIONS OF FFWC, 1896-1919.. 331

APPENDIX V CAMPAIGN SONG FOR MAY MANN JENNINGS.... 333

BIBLIOGRAPHY..... 335

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH..... 345

Abstract of Dissertation Presented to
the Graduate Council of the University of Florida
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

MAY MANN JENNINGS,
FLORIDA'S GENTEEL ACTIVIST

BY

Linda Darlene Moore Vance

August 1980

Chairman: Samuel Proctor
Major Department: History

May Mann Jennings, 1872-1963, was one of Florida's most distinguished twentieth-century activists. She stands alone as the state's most important and successful female citizen. Unlike other civic-minded women who were married to prominent Florida men, May Jennings' many public contributions were not dependent upon or overshadowed by those of her husband, William Sherman Jennings, the state's seventeenth governor.

For over sixty years she provided ideas and leadership to the Florida women's movement and to other political and civic causes. She was unexcelled as a strategist and lobbyist and served on scores of state boards and commissions. She worked for progress in the areas of education, conservation, beautification, political reform, and female rights. She also played an active role in making the Florida

Federation of Women's Clubs politically viable, in establishing the first state park, the first State Board of Forestry, and in the creation of Everglades National Park. She was directly responsible for the establishment of various Jacksonville civic organizations and in the planning and implementation of many statewide beautification projects. Late in her career she was honored by the Florida Legislature, Stetson University, the State Chamber of Commerce, and the University of Florida.

This assessment of May Jennings' life and contributions to Florida has been based upon two things. First, upon her concrete accomplishments, as listed above, and second, upon the fact that she achieved many successes at a time when women were either politically disfranchised or were viewed with skepticism and ridiculed by their male counterparts. Against great odds she overcame society's roadblocks and unselfishly furthered the public good while at the same time helping to bring Florida women into the political mainstream.

CHAPTER I
"CRYSTAL GROVE" AND PAPA

A young family from the north, Austin Mann, his wife, Rachel, and their baby daughter, May, wintered in Ocala in 1873. Impressed with the beauty of the state, with the business opportunities that seemed available, and with the beneficial effects the warm climate had upon his wife's health, Austin decided to make Florida the family's permanent home. By autumn of the following year he had purchased an established orange grove at Crystal River in Hernando County and had moved his family into the small cottage on the premises. They called the place "Crystal Grove," and it became the childhood home of their daughter who would grow up to become one of Florida's most notable women.[1]

Many people, places, and events shaped May Mann's character and personality. First and foremost was her father who was very much like May in his political ambition and his ability to work with people. May's parents shared a loving relationship. Little is known about Rachel Mann, but more is available on Austin, who became a successful businessman and prominent Florida politician. He was a dynamic and carefree individual. Energetic and imaginative, with an inventive mind, his entrepreneurial talents developed early. He was small of stature, feisty and restless by

nature, a spellbinding talker, and a natty dresser who had an eye for the ladies. He was a born promoter, what some might call a "wheeler dealer."[2] Mann was also a visionary who was often as impractical as he was ahead of his time. A free-thinking nonconformist, he was usually ready to try out new ideas and spent much of his life in economic and political pursuits which brought him both notoriety and financial rewards.

By nearly every yardstick, he was already a success, when at the age of twenty-six, he moved his family to Florida. Born in Delaware County, Ohio, in 1847, he attended local schools and for three years attended Capitol University at Columbus.[3] He then studied law with his cousin, G.L. Converse, a future congressman, and was admitted to the Ohio bar in 1869. Mann was ambitious and interested in things other than the law, and moved east where he believed there were more business opportunities. While at Mauch Chunk, Pennsylvania, he met and married Rachel Elizabeth Kline, the second of five children of Frederick C. Kline and Marietta Staples Kline, longtime residents of the area. Rachel had thick, dark hair, attractive features, and was much admired for her piano playing and her clear soprano voice. She was a Methodist and sang in the local church's choir. Unfortunately, she suffered from poor health and was to die while still in her twenties. She and Austin were married on April 24, 1871.[4] On April 25, 1872, one year and a day after the marriage, May Elizabeth Austin Mann was born in

Centerville, Bayonne Province, New Jersey, where the family was then residing.[5] Austin by that time had developed a new type of silver heel plate which proved valuable in the manufacture of shoes and which brought him a large, steady income.[6]

After Austin made the decision to locate his family in Florida, he returned north, settled his business affairs, and with $90,000 received from selling the heel plate patent, he purchased "Crystal Grove." Posterity has not recorded what Rachel, a refined young lady from the urban Northeast, thought of Crystal River and its environs. She was probably appalled by the area's primitiveness and isolation and disappointed with the house at the grove. Years later, in an interview, May remembered that the dwelling was a small, crudely-built cottage sitting "on pine pillars about eight to ten feet from the ground."[7] That first encounter with the living conditions at "Crystal Grove" must have been disheartening since the family had been accustomed to more elegant accommodations. In those days houses in that part of Florida had only one major purpose, to provide a high, dry place to eat and sleep. Austin soon built a more appropriate and spacious home for his family.

In the 1870s Crystal River was scarcely more than a hamlet with a population of less than 100 people.[8] Cut off from both major highway and railroad routes there was only one practical way in or out of the place. One had to travel aboard one of the steamers which stopped periodically to

discharge freight and to take on firewood as it plied between Cedar Key and Tampa Bay. Contemporary descriptions of the area were not very flattering. Daniel G. Brinton, who wrote a guidebook in 1869, described the Hernando County coastal lowland as "rich" even though it was "the most unhealthy part of the penisula."[9] J.M. Hawks, the author of another tourguide published in 1871 for "those who migrate with the swallows and robins," described Crystal River as a "flourishing village" whose inhabitants made their living by farming, fishing, tending citrus groves, and working in the cedar sawmills.[10] The people were described as "peaceable and quiet, frugal and hospitable" but not much interested in politics or in the outside world. There were no public schools, few churches, and the nearest newspapers were published at Ocala and Tampa, both a day's journey away.

Why Austin Mann chose this remote spot to locate is not known. While Florida's tropical beauty and the promise of better health for his wife contributed to his decision, it is also obvious that he was afflicted with what one historian has called "orange fever," which was sweeping Florida in the 1870s.[11] Intrigued by tales of quick riches, thousands of wealthy Northerners began moving south, investing large sums of money in citrus acreage. How simple it all sounded; money figuratively growing on trees available just for the picking. One alluring advertisement induced

many a Yankee and his money to come to Florida. It stated: "Clear off one acre of ground. Plant but one hundred orange trees twenty-one feet apart and in three years one has a capital of $10,000 bringing an interest of 10%. The land will cost but little. Each tree will produce 1,000 oranges each year bringing 1¢ a piece."[12] This promise is more readily appreciated when one remembers that one dollar in those days was equivalent to approximately ten today. Would-be grove owners flooded the state but most by-passed the remote Gulf coast region.

Hernando County was a frontier area in the 1870s. Although former United States Senator David Levy Yulee had his large and prosperous plantation there until the 1860s, few of the area's original settlers remained after the Civil War. Hampton Dunn, in his history of the county, says "it was still a frontier, the people hacking out a living under primitive conditions."[13] According to one oldtimer, "in the early days bear and deer were as common as cattle now."[14] Turkey, otter, and other wildlife were also abundant. The people lived off the land, which was fertile and productive. It was also cheap since most of it was nearly inaccessible. Although less isolated than far South Florida the area was still remote enough for its growth to be hindered. Most supplies and mail arrived by water although stagecoaches ran from Ocala and Brooksville weekly when the weather was good. Such land facilities were not very

dependable. One of those coaches was described by a visitor to the area as "a little rattletrap sort of affair."[15]

Austin Mann, an active and ambitious man, acquired a reputation in his community as an adroit businessman. His grove proved lucrative and provided capital for other investments. He purchased additional lands for speculative purposes and undertook various innovative agricultural ventures.[16] Florida's west coast needed developers like him; one writer noted that there was not "a single improved farming implement in Hernando County."[17] At one time Mann tried raising sheep but the venture failed, even though he imported high quality Marino stock from Spain.[18] Perhaps his neighbors had something to do with his failure, for the cattlemen in the county resented the intrusion of the new livestock, and they turned their dogs loose on his flocks. Not to be outdone, he acquired the largest herd of cattle in the area, some 200 head. In addition to his agricultural and business interests he practiced law. He was very much interested in local politics, and by 1881 he had served two terms as a county commissioner, had attended various district and state political conventions, and had been elected to the 1880 Hancock-English presidential electoral ticket.

Mann was able to pursue successful political and business careers simultaneously. His ingenuity and energies were well-suited to the post-Civil War era in which he lived. He held to the belief that progress and the public good were

irrevocably linked to the many grand schemes in agriculture, timber, land, and railroad development which promoters and investors were relentlessly pursuing everywhere. As a consequence he involved himself in a number of activities which he hoped would attract settlers to Florida and make money for himself at the same time. He became an enthusiastic booster of railroad, canal, and road development within his adopted state.

While Mann had the ideas and the abilities needed to become a nineteenth-century tycoon, he did not have the ruthlessness necessary. He was a promoter, but he was also a maverick, for unlike many entrepreneurs of that period he was too trustful of those he met, and he often misjudged character. He also possessed a strong sympathy for poor people and devoted time and energy to provide them more economic opportunities and a measure of social and legal justice. Mann's forbears were Midwestern Protestants. Born and raised on a farm, he always thought of himself first as a farmer and then as a businessman. Thus, while his abilities and personality enabled him to adjust to a time when capitalists were profiting handsomely from the development of America's frontiers, he himself was never to pull off the coveted "Big Deal" and make the millions he desired.

If he never became a millionaire, he was by most standards financially successful. Unfortunately, he never

managed his money very well; he was extravagant, spending freely on travel, fine clothes, cigars, horses, and expensive hotels and restaurants. He also enjoyed hob-nobbing with the rich and famous at their elegant watering holes along the East Coast.[19] His wife and children led as comfortable and genteel a life as frontier Florida would permit. His business and political activities forced him to spend much time away from his home. Though his finances were to fluctuate his family never felt any insecurity, and as far as May ever knew there was always enough money available to live well. She grew up feeling both emotionally and financially secure. Like her father, she was also to champion the less fortunate, work for social and political progress, and promote Florida and its people.

Austin Mann's spendthrift nature sometimes forced him into debt, but mortgages and personal loans helped carry him between harvests, elections, and business deals. On occasion he was on the brink of bankruptcy, but he managed to recover, relying on little more than his perseverance. He never lost his optimistic outlook. Even in the bleakest of times he believed things would work out well. Through the years during dark times he wrote his family the following: "I can't make a deal at all. Seems tomorrow I think I will see a ray of light. . . . It is simply almost impossible to get men willing to part with cash and strange to say I have been parting with mine very rapidly but I know how to do once I am busted," and, "It takes pluck to make a

deal at these times. If I fall down I might as well keep going. . . . I am a fair sample of a gambler or like Napoleon believe in my Lucky Star. Yet even those who have a Lucky Star fail to see it in cloudy weather. Yet I am in good spirits."[20] To his daughter he wrote, "Why worry and make of life so anxious a matter? What you can't help don't worry about. Dear, you take life too seriously. It is a large joke."[21] May was to inherit her father's positiveness but not his nonchalant fatalism. She had her feet planted more firmly on the ground.

Austin Mann had a wide-ranging career. At one time or another after arriving in Florida he practiced law, owned and managed several sizable citrus groves and out-of-state peach farms, and operated a newspaper. He was elected to public office and was a leader in his political party. He promoted railroad, canal, and land development schemes, headed the Florida Orange and Vegetable Auction Company, managed the Florida Home Market and the Sub-Tropical Exposition, served as president of the Florida State Agriculture Association, and organized the Florida "Good Roads" movement.[22] This peripatetic lifestyle, together with his active mind, caused one friend to refer to him as a "brainy, rushing man."[23] He himself admitted: "I have to be moving. I hear the rumbling of the [railroad] car and must move on even if it overtakes me."[24] Throughout his life he remained busy traveling, politicking, and organizing business

deals. He was reluctant to stop and rest although late in life he wrote his family: "I sometimes get tired of rambling always waiting for a deal to close. . . . I am going to get into something else. I am tired of skimming wind."[25] May inherited her father's restlessness and tireless vitality, but she was able to channel her energies into more practical, worthwhile public service.

Throughout his career, Mann was undaunted by inconsistencies; he championed liberal political beliefs while still insisting upon a laissez-faire capitalistic economic philosophy. Apparently he was not aware of these incompatibilities. Accused sometimes of being a secret Republican, he was identified from time to time over the years as a Democrat, Independent, Allianceman, and Populist. His inconsistencies, plus the various situations and alliances he seemed always to be enmeshed in, led his political opponents to accuse him of erratic and fickle behavior. Enemies accused him at one time or another of being "an aristocrat," "a first-class demagogue," "a land shark" and a "Political Nondescript."[26] Naturally his admirers and friends viewed him much differently. If his unconventional hybrid politics defy classification, it is obvious that he was a shrewd politician who possessed superior abilities and who seemed to thrive on the rough and tumble of Florida politics. Regardless of the assessment of Mann by friend or foe he left his mark on Florida and on its business and political institutions.

During the years that Mann was consolidating his business interests and establishing a political career his family continued to increase. Three years after May's birth, a boy, Roy Frederick, was born. In 1876 a second daughter, Nina Lucy, joined the family, and in 1879, Grace Irene was born.[27] A fifth child, Carl, died shortly after birth.

"Crystal Grove" was a lively place to live in the 1870s; it was not only the family's homestead, but also Mann's political headquarters. During these years May's lifelong fascination with politics began. From early childhood she watched her father's political friends come and go. The lights often burned late at the Mann home while her papa and his associates held meetings to talk over political strategy. One can perhaps imagine the little girl standing in the shadows listening to the discussions as the grownups sat around the dinner table and talked politics. May was the only one of the Mann children to develop any inclination toward politics.

Her father was the most important personal influence on her during her childhood years. Similar to him in personality and habits, she followed in his footsteps by later pursuing her own public career. From her mother she inherited artistic talents, but from her father she inherited a zest for life, and an optimistic outlook that was never to leave her. She also inherited his love of politics. From the beginning Mann treated his eldest daughter as his

favorite. He never excluded her from adult activities or discussions, and he never assumed that there were some things she could not do just because she was a girl. This liberating notion was to have a key place in her own philosophy of life. To her politics was just as legitimate an interest for women as for men. This radical, but to her natural, belief was to thrust her to the forefront of the women's movement just at the time when females were beginning to enter Florida's political arena.

The Crystal River area began to expand with the arrival of new settlers. The Manns were recognized as one of the most prosperous and prominent families in the county. If life was comparatively simple, it was not dull. Children were educated either at home or at one of the small private schools in the town. In addition to the usual household and farm chores, there were picnics, church socials, political rallies, fishing trips, blackberry hunts, holiday celebrations, orange harvest time, romps in the new cut hay, and buggy rides down shady, moss draped forest lanes. May especially enjoyed horseback riding. She liked to perform stunts and do acrobatics while riding her horse. She became an expert horsewoman. Years later she hung her girlhood saddle and riding habit in her Jacksonville home as a gentle reminder of those earlier, carefree days.[28]

Even "Crystal Grove" itself was to have an influence upon her. To grow up in rural Florida's tropical wilderness,

in the midst of a citrus grove where the sweet scents and beauty of nature were as close as the very air itself, was to leave a deep impression upon her. It produced in her a lifelong love of the outdoors. Plants, trees, flowers, and wildlife became for her a special and precious part of life. Later she planned and developed award-winning gardens and she owned thousands of acres of Florida land. Because of her attachment to nature she became a recognized leader in the movement to conserve and preserve Florida's tropical wilderness. Of all her public works her commitment to this cause never wavered. At times it would take precedence over all her other interests. When grown she remembered "Crystal Grove" with fondness. She wrote: "My memory lingers caressingly over the years spent in dear old Hernando . . . back to my childhood . . . Crystal River is very dear to me."[29]

After 1880 the Mann family was never the same. First Nina Lucy, four years of age, died during the summer of 1880. Rachel, pregnant with the family's fifth child and weak from a chronic cough, never recovered from the death of her child. The next winter she contracted what the family believed was a severe cold but in reality was advanced tuberculosis. Unable to recover her strength she traveled to Pennsylvania to live with her parents and try to regain her health as she awaited the birth of her new child. Carl Mann was born on March 25, 1881, but Rachel never recovered. Weak and unable to care for her baby properly he too took

sick and died only a few months after his birth. This was a blow from which Rachel Mann never recovered. Bedridden and unable to care for herself she lingered less than a year and died at her parents' home on August 20, 1882.[30] She was only twenty-eight. The medical cause of her passing was tuberculosis, but grief no doubt played a major role. Austin was at her bedside when she died. A gentle woman, Florida friends remembered her as one who would "mount her horse with her babe and a basket of necessaries in her arms, and ride ten miles through the forest to minister to the sick and poor."[31] She was buried in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

The loss of Nina Lucy affected May deeply, but nothing was to overwhelm her and change her life quite as much as the death of her mother. Years later when May was directing the clubwomen of Florida in public health work she wrote to a colleague, who was proposing an anti-tuberculosis campaign, "I do not think there is any more important work. . . . I lost my mother with the disease, when I was a little girl of nine. . . . So you see the matter comes very close to me."[32] It is not difficult to imagine what a mother's death can mean to such a young child, but in May's case it is known that drastic changes took place in her life. She became the eldest female in the household and she was forced to assume responsibilities beyond her years. Her mother's death was a deep personal loss. In later years she hung an oil painting of her mother in her

bedroom, and one of the first things she did each morning was to wipe the moisture and dust from that portrait. It was a symbolic gesture allowing her to express her innermost feelings.[33]

Austin Mann was also faced with a serious problem. How was he to raise three children alone? There were servants in the house but they could hardly be expected to provide the close supervision and guidance which the children needed. He himself had neither the inclination nor the time to take on that responsibility, for at the moment he was in the midst of an intense political campaign for the state senate. Two months after his wife's death the following item appeared in a Tampa paper: "The Democrats of Hernando County have succeeded in getting their local politics into a terrible tangle. It seems the Mann nominated for the Senate, was not the man they wanted at all, so another 'Conservative Democrat' has come out Independently against him."[34] Mann won the election, and the problem of how to care for his children became more acute than ever.

Crystal River friends helped out temporarily but a more permanent arrangement was necessary if Mann was to fulfill his public duties and be sure that his children's needs were properly met. He persuaded his cousin and her husband to come from Ohio to live at "Crystal Grove" and to care for the children while he attended the legislative session at Tallahassee. The arrangement was only for a short while because the couple had to return to their own

home after a few months. Mann then took the children to Jacksonville where they lived with friends, but this too proved unsatisfactory.[35] Once more he was faced with the problem of what to do. In October, 1883, he thought he had found a solution. Roy was to be cared for by family friends in Brooksville, and May and Grace were enrolled as year-round boarders at St. Joseph's Academy, a convent school in St. Augustine.

Austin Mann continued to cultivate both his grove and his political career. In 1885 he married again. His second wife was Susie B. Williams of Nashville, Tennessee. Once more there was a mother in the household but only for a brief time. She too died a short time later in childbirth.[36] Again Austin was left a widower, and now there was a newborn infant to care for. The family with which Roy was living agreed to take Austin, Jr. The girls remained at the academy, and a new chapter in May's life began.

Notes to Chapter I

[1]John Q. Langford, Jr., "Senator Austin S. Mann" (unpublished MS., Gainesville, 1950), P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History, n.p.

[2]Interview with Dorothy Brown Jennings. July 27, 1978, Penney Farms, Florida.

[3]Florida Legislative Directory 12th Session 1883, p. 59. Austin Mann was born January 14, 1847.

[4]Elizabeth Bell Hightower to author. July 2, 1978. Rachel Kline was born on September 11, 1852.

[5]Lucy Worthington Blackman, The Women of Florida (Jacksonville, 1939), II, p. 92.

[6]Langford, Jr., "Senator Austin S. Mann," n.p.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Richard J. Stanaback, A History of Hernando County, 1840-1975 (Brooksville, 1976), p. 47.

[9]David G. Brinton, A Guidebook of Florida and the South for Tourists, Invalids, and Immigrants (Jacksonville, 1869), p. 107.

[10]J.M. Hawks, The Florida Gazetteer (New Orleans, 1871), p. 45.

[11]R.A. Divine, "The History of Citrus Culture in Florida, 1565-1895" (unpublished MS., Gainesville, 1952), P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History, n.p.

[12]Hawks, Florida Gazetteer, p. 45.

[13]Hampton Dunn, Back Home: A History of Citrus County, Florida (Inverness, 1978), p. 74.

[14]Ibid., p. 67.

[15]George M. Barbour, Florida for Tourists, Invalids and Settlers (New York, 1882), p. 53.

[16]Hernando County land ownership certificates for 79.8, 119.7, 40, 41.6, 80.7, and 40.1 acres, 1882. Austin Shuey Mann Papers (3 Boxes), Box 1. P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History, Gainesville (hereafter cited as the ASM Papers).

[17]Hawks, Florida Gazetteer, p. 46.

[18]Langford, Jr., "Senator Austin S. Mann," n.p.

[19]Interview with Dorothy Brown Jennings.

[20]A.S. Mann to May M. Jennings, October 5, 1903, December 4, 1903, and December 14, 1903. May Mann Jennings Papers (19 Boxes), Box 1 (hereafter cited as MMJ Papers). A.S. Mann to William S. Jennings, August 22, 1899. William S. Jennings Papers (28 Boxes), Box 3. P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History, Gainesville (hereafter cited as WSJ Papers).

[21]A.S. Mann to May Jennings, August 9, 1906, December 10, 1903. MMJ Papers, Box 2.

[22]Langford, Jr., "Senator Austin S. Mann," n.p.

[23]S.S. Harvey to A.S. Mann, June 5, 1902. ASM Papers, Box 1.

[24]A.S. Mann to May Jennings, December 22, 1903. MMJ Papers, Box 2.

[25]A.S. Mann to Marietta Staples Kline, December 22, 1903; and to May Jennings, October 11, 1904. MMJ Papers, Box 2.

[26]Landford, Jr., "Senator Austin S. Mann," n.p.

[27]United States Census, 10th, 1880 Florida, Hernando County.

[28]Interview with Dorothy Jennings Sandridge, June 8, 1978. Orange Park, Florida.

[29]Speech, May Jennings, "What Brooksville and Hernando County Can Be If Her People Will," 1915. MMJ Papers, Box 16. May Jennings to Mrs. Louis Thompson, May 18, 1917. MMJ Papers, Box 10.

[30]Mann-Jennings family Bible in possession of Dorothy Jennings Sandridge.

[31]Undated and unidentified newspaper clipping in possession of Dorothy Jennings Sandridge.

[32]May Jennings to Dr. Grace Whitford, September 7, 1917. MMJ Papers, Box 11.

[33]Interview with Dorothy Brown Jennings.

[34]Tampa Sunland Tribune, October 20, 1882.

[35]Biographical sketch of May Mann Jennings, 1919. MMJ Papers, Box 16.

[36]Austin Mann, Jr., was born in Tallahassee, December 20, 1886.

CHAPTER II
"BEYOND THE ALPS LIES ITALY"

May Mann and her sister remained at the St. Augustine convent for almost seven years, a period that would leave an indelible mark upon the girls. Although they were only eleven and five at the time, St. Joseph's Academy provided May and Grace with the personal attention, discipline, and education that they needed.[1] They received moral guidance and a sound education, and they left the school with a strong sense of duty and an understanding of their responsibility to society.

While the convent provided the girls the love and care they needed, Roy and Austin, Jr., were not so fortunate. They were to become alienated and to develop behavior problems which later brought dismay and grief to the family. The contrast between Austin Mann's sons and his two daughters was striking and can only be attributed to the difference in the quality of their respective up-bringings.

The school at St. Augustine was operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph, a Catholic order which had been organized at Le Puy, France, in 1648.[2] The order came to America at the summons of Bishop Augustine Verot after the Civil War to minister to the newly-freed Florida slaves. Arriving in St. Augustine in 1866, they established one of the state's

first schools for Negroes. A school for white boys was soon added, and in 1877 a school for white girls was established.[3] The sisterhood started academies elsewhere in the state, the most important at Jacksonville and Fernandina. The St. Augustine school was the original institution and the site of the Motherhouse of the order in America. From the time the nuns arrived in Florida they raised money to support themselves and their schools by teaching, giving private art, music, and French lessons, and by selling their famous delicate, handmade lace. By 1883, when May and Grace enrolled at St. Joseph, its reputation as a highly respected educational institution was firmly established.[4]

From 1874 until 1980 the convent and academy have occupied the same site in St. Augustine. The O'Reilly house, one of the city's oldest structures, and still maintained by the order, once served as the academy. When May entered the school, however, there was a new three-story building which housed the classrooms, chapel, and a dormitory. It was of Mediterranean style architecture, constructed of coquina and brick, overlaid with white plaster, and it had a red tile roof. It fronted on St. George street and was only two blocks from the waterfront and historic market square. The building still stands and is still in use by the order.[5]

During the 1880s the school was surrounded by spacious grounds which contained vegetable, fruit and flower gardens,

grape arbors, and a quaint little octagonal-shaped gazebo. The entire property of several acres was enclosed by a high rock wall which provided privacy. Great wooden gates marked the entrances. The place projected a friendly, inviting appearance because of the lovely tropical vines and flowers that cascaded over the walls.

From the time the academy first began enrolling white students most of them came from St. Augustine and the surrounding area. There were some, however, from elsewhere in Florida. Students of all religious persuasions, including those who were not Christian, were admitted, but the majority were Catholics. The Manns were Baptists, and May and Grace maintained that faith throughout their years at the academy.

St. Joseph's Academy was unique; unlike most institutions in the South, with perhaps the exception of schools in New Orleans, it projected an international flavor. The nuns were French and many of the students came from Spanish, Minorcan, and Italian backgrounds. This fact perhaps added to May's natural inquisitive, searching nature. She was always interested in other places and peoples. She was well-read and tried to learn as much about other people and far-away places as possible. She liked to travel and to read about other countries. Her interest in new ideas and different cultures was obvious to her friends and associates. Once, in explanation of her liberal attitude, she wrote, "I was educated in a convent and I look at life through much broader glasses than the average person does."[6]

When May entered St. Joseph's the superior was Mother Marie Lazarus Lhostal and the principal was Sister Margaret Mary, both pioneer workers in the order. They became May's mentors and counselors and were to remain her friends long after she left the school. The steadying influence of the nuns at the convent left May with an equanimity and equipoise which she carried the rest of her life.

May looked after Grace while they lived at the school. Their close relationship enabled them to maintain a sense of family and prevented them from feeling isolated and forgotten. Grace remained under May's guardianship until years later when she was married and had established a home of her own. The girls lived in a large dormitory room on the top floor of the school building. "From the moment young girls arrived at the convent they were struck by the kindness of the sisters, women who wore long black dresses and veils, and white guimpes (collars) starched of linen, which they called holy habits. Almost immediately, the sisters would take the newcomer upstairs to be assigned her place in the dormitory. The first sight that met the eye left an impression of spotless cleanliness: long rows of (iron) beds neatly curtained in white and windows that opened almost to the floor, set in a large room made airy by tall ceilings. Off the dormitory was the lavatory, with several basins, tubs and stalls. Washing one's face in sulphur water was a new experience for some. Supper in the refectory

(seldom called the dining room) was served after dark, and then the girls gathered for what the sisters called recreation. Bells sounded for all changes of occupation and when the bell rang, very loudly, for retiring, the rules of the academy were that the girls were to obey immediately. A new girl went through a period of orientation, learning the rules, including early rising, and going through the beautiful grounds of the academy. Students there interchanged the words academy and convent as if they were the same, but the convent was off bounds for the students."[7]

The girls were allowed to take but few personal items to the school, but each had that omnipresent boarding school object, the traveling trunk, in which she kept her most personal and prized possessions. Twice each year the school had a "trunk day." The boarders carted the musty old things, some of which were quite large, out of the dormitory and down to the grounds below, where amongst the roses and fruit trees they opened them up and aired out their contents. "Trunk day" was looked forward to with some anticipation for it was like a holiday with fun and laughter and the exchanging and swapping of prized treasures.

Despite the confinement and strict rules, life at St. Joseph's was not gloomy or harsh. The girls received, along with the academic course, a traditional southern-style finishing school education. A school prospectus described the school's offerings. Discipline was "mild but firm,"

and the instruction the kind where "young ladies (were) tenderly cared for and trained not only in matters of knowledge, but also in the principles of refined deportment."[8] There was constant emphasis on morals and manners.

Tuition and board were $140 per year. There were no uniforms except on Sundays when the girls were required to wear black dresses, white shirtwaists, and high-buttoned shoes. Rules and regulations were closely supervised, and included "strict adherence to correct and refined language, polite deportment, gentle and engaging manners at all times, mandatory attendance at all public exercises, the observance of silence except in hours of recreation, no visits home during the entire year, the subjection of letters and packages to inspection, and the prohibition of private friendships."[9]

"Music, both vocal and instrumental, as well as drawing and painting, received special attention. The latest in chemistry apparatus was at the command of the pupils. Boarders were taught, without extra charge, plain sewing, embroidery, different kinds of needle work and the making of French lace. Every means was taken on the part of the sisters to make the academy not only a place where knowledge and manners were acquired, but also to make the institution a happy home for the pupils during their school terms. . . . The academy had some modern conveniences, with water throughout the house and cold and warm sulphur baths available. . . . Convent girls learned to live by group rules."[10]

One boarder left this delightful description of the typical day in the life of a St. Joseph girl: "There are always some sleepy heads among the crowd, so the sister in charge has to shake the lazy ones and tell them the bell has rung. When all are up one of the girls says prayers and some answer. Sometimes I do and sometimes I don't. It depends on how I feel. Then we hurry to dress--not much time for primping but if you do not look neat you are ordered back to the dormitory before school and lose a mark on neatness. Besides you are reprimanded by one of the sisters before the other girls. As we do not enjoy that we try to look our prettiest. The next thing we hear is the clapping of hands. That is another signal and it means that it is time for Mass. We have one little girl who primps so long before the glass that she is never ready to go downstairs with the rest. You can hear her thin voice chirping out, 'Please don't lock the door, sister.' Sister stood the nonsense as long as she could, but one day she locked the young lady in and the rest of us proceeded on our way. The young lady rushed downstairs on the sisters' side of the house and met us on the second landing, and talked indignantly about being closed in. Downstairs this is what we met: 'Well, girls, I thought a regiment of soldiers was coming and not a crowd of convent girls.' We know who was the guilty one but said nothing. We went a little farther on when out popped a sister from the

chapel: 'What do you mean, girls, by talking so loud. You know you are not permitted to talk going to or coming from the chapel.' All looked at one another and giggled a little and then proceeded to the chapel. We are expected to be there on time to say morning prayers before Mass, but sometimes we are too late and other times we are too soon. It is very seldom, however, that we fail by being too early. Mass over we march out to breakfast. Occasionally some girls will laugh or talk so much that we all are called back and made to walk from the chapel to the refectory again. By this time we are quite hungry and are ready for breakfast so we behave. After breakfast we go upstairs and make up our beds; then some go to practice, others to study. From half-past eight to half-past two we are in school. From two-thirty until four we do fancy work, play or read, from four to six we study, at six we go to the chapel to say the beads. When the beads are said, we go to supper. After supper, if it is pleasant, we recreate in the yard; if not we go to the sitting room where the sister reads aloud to us large girls while we work on embroidery. The juniors at their end of the room play games or talk. Sometimes they forget they are in the house and become too boisterous then sister stops reading to say, 'Not so loud, girls.' At eight-fifteen the bell rings to retire. We go to the chapel and one of the older girls says night prayers. Then we must go in silence and order to the dormitory. Some

of us would like to 'cut up' but we know that if we do not go up in order, we will be marched down again and again until we do as we are told; as that is not very enjoyable we usually try to behave. Some are noble enough to do right because it is right, but others--well, it takes all kinds of people to make a world."[11]

Life within the confines of St. Joseph's Academy was not completely isolated. During the 1880s, when May lived there, St. Augustine was a lively city. Henry Flagler had become fascinated with the area, where he came on his honeymoon in 1883, and had decided to turn the town into a fashionable winter resort for the rich. During the decade the place underwent a major boom in building and expansion. There was an excitement which permeated all of north Florida. Northern tourists, many in their private railroad cars, arrived to stay in the magnificent hotels, the Ponce de Leon, the Alcazar, and the Cordova, which Flagler built. There were parties, fancy-dress balls, lawn tennis, trips to the beach, historic sites to visit, and promenades along the waterfront to keep the winter tourists busy.[12]

May and the other girls knew of the exciting happenings taking place just beyond the school's walls. They heard about the parties and the social life and about the rich and famous people who were visiting the town. For the girls there were occasional chaperoned visits to local stores to shop. There were also school plays, musicals,

picnics, and games to keep them occupied. Sometimes there were even trips to the beach. According to one school advertisement, parents were advised that "there is a fine bath house situated on the Bay near the Convent (and) the young ladies are frequently taken to bathe."[13] May liked St. Augustine, and after leaving the school she visited the city each winter for over thirty years.

The scholastic year was divided into two terms covering the months of September through January and February through June. There were written examinations at the end of each term. The curriculum was divided into primary, junior, and senior courses of study. May was an excellent student. Self-motivated, articulate, and inquisitive, she had a brilliant mind. She was one of the best pupils ever to attend the school and was a regular member of the honor roll. She became proficient in music, piano, voice, and art, and was awarded a gold medal for excellence in class work in her junior year.[14] She received gold medals in her senior year for achievements in music, art, piano, voice English composition, and French.[15] Her course requirement for her senior program, which took three years to complete, included catechism, Church history, etymology, geography, ancient history, Middle Ages history, rhetoric, grammar, science, mental and practical arithmetic, algebra, elocution, modern history, logic, chemistry, botany, geology,

literature, astronomy, composition, classics, bookkeeping, mental philosophy, and civil government.[16]

May graduated valedictorian of her class in 1889. Her valedictory address was entitled "Beyond the Alps Lies Italy." It was an amazing little Victorian composition, poetic in style, in which she described, through metaphor, her years of residence and study at St. Joseph's and how she felt about it and home now that she had achieved her goal and was leaving. She had climbed the mountains and overcome all obstacles, and down below lay the fair vista of a lovely land which beckoned her onward.[17]

May did not leave the convent immediately but elected to stay an extra year for post-graduate study. By the time she left the school she was eighteen and an articulate, well-educated young woman who was ready to take her place in the outside world. Her fellow students wrote of her: "our esteemed friend and schoolmate, Miss May Mann through her amiable disposition is much regarded and will ever have the fondest love of her teachers and companions. Having entered the academy when a mere child she was placed under the careful guardianship of the sisters. At the expiration of six years (she) was the worthy recipient of the highest honors. She proved herself to be a studious girl, a respectful pupil and a faithful friend."[18]

During their years in St. Augustine, Austin Mann visited his daughters frequently. Undoubtedly he approved

of the educational program at the convent for he publicly supported the school by advertising in its monthly publications.[19] During school holidays and summers May stayed with her father at "Crystal Grove" and later at Brooksville, where he moved in 1887. During those times she often accompanied him to his political meetings and on his travels around his district. She received much valuable political experience during those visits home.

Austin married a third time. In January of 1891 he married Alsina M. Clark of Jacksonville. She was much younger than he and outlived him by many years. May was distraught that her father married a woman her own age but she soon forgave him and became a good friend of her young stepmother. Mann's political career had continued while his daughters were at St. Joseph's. From 1883 until 1887 he represented Hernando County and the twenty-second district in the state senate. As a member of the liberal wing of the Democratic party, he differed with the Bourbon leadership over the issues of railroad and corporate regulation, agricultural policy, and Negro rights.

Mann attended the 1883, 1885, and 1887 legislative sessions. His main interest was agriculture and the promotion and development of the state. For two sessions he chaired the committees on agriculture and immigration. He tried without success to get a state bureau and commission of agriculture established, and he sought to promote Florida

by urging the state's participation in world and regional fairs. Mann also served on committees which investigated the Disston land sale, Indian War claims, and the Internal Improvement Fund. Well known throughout Florida, it was rumored that he would become the Independent party's candidate for governor in 1884, but he spurned that movement and supported the regular Democratic candidates.[20]

In the 1885 session Mann somewhat reluctantly supported Wilkinson Call's election to the United States Senate, for he doubted the sincerity of Call's liberalism. During that session he served on the committee which organized the historic state constitution convention which convened at Tallahassee, June 9, 1885. He played a prominent role at the convention, chairing the committee on suffrage and eligibility, around which swirled several of the convention's most controversial issues.[21] The 1885 Constitution decentralized state government and stripped the governor of much of his appointive powers. Mann favored homerule and local elections, and he clashed with representatives from "blackbelt" counties who favored a strong executive and who wanted to disfranchise Negroes by adopting the poll tax. The poll tax was not popular in the counties in which whites predominated. Mann, who sided with farmers and labor, believed that the "poll tax was unfair to the hard-working laboring class."[22] He was responsible for the constitutional articles which made prohibition a matter of

local option and which authorized construction of a cross-Florida ship canal. He also supported creation of a state commissioner of agriculture.

In the 1887 legislature Mann attempted to take over the leadership of the anti-railroad Democrats from the Call faction, but he failed. He withdrew his public endorsement of Call whom he considered a "windbag" and a "fair weather liberal."[23] His feud with Call, which lasted for many years, consumed much of his energy. In the 1887 session he also supported a bill which created Pasco and Citrus counties out of parts of Hernando County, although passage of this bill was to prove harmful to his career.

A special election was called to choose representatives for the new counties. The election in Citrus County, Mann's old-new district, turned into a donnybrook. Mann, who was standing for reelection and who was already a controversial figure, threw his support behind the new town of Mannsfield, for county seat. He was one of its developers and had already succeeded in having it designated as the temporary county seat. The campaign became heated, and two factions developed labeled Manns and anti-Manns.

Mann was soundly defeated. One anecdote of the contest was told years later by May and others and perhaps gives a clue to why he lost. It seems that, "the only charge that could be brought against [Mann] was that he was an aristocrat. He denied the charge and said he loved

Citrus County and its people, and was a cracker just like the rest of them. But when it came to the political speeches, the anti-Manns were loaded for bear. They charged that the senator slept in a nightshirt and was, therefore, an aristocrat. They called his hand when he was making a speech and forced him to admit that he (had) slept in a nightshirt even the night before. So what more did the people want? The candidate himself had admitted that he slept in a nightshirt, and anyone who slept in a nightshirt was an aristocrat, and an aristocrat was not a cracker, and by no stretch of the imagination should an aristocrat be a senator from Citrus County; and if you voted for him, someone might think you had a 'tetch' of aristocracy in your own system and might tell someone else. And it was just possible that it would become common knowledge. And that would be a disgrace that you could never live down. On election day the senator was snowed under."[24]

Mann's town fared little better. When an election was held to choose the county seat charges of stuffed ballot boxes resulted in an inconclusive outcome. The anti-Mann group settled the issue once and for all. They moved all the courthouse records, furniture, and equipment to Inverness at night, catching the Mann forces off guard. Mannsfield soon became a ghost town.[25] Angered and humiliated by his defeat and suffering from financial losses sustained during the harsh winter of 1886, Austin Mann left Crystal River.

He sold "Crystal Grove" and most of his other properties in that area and moved to Brooksville. There he established a new grove, bought the local newspaper, and began to practice law.[26] He continued his interest in politics.

The 1880s were the years of farm discontent throughout the South and West. In 1887 the Farmer's Alliance, which had begun in Texas, began to organize in Florida. By 1889 it was estimated that there were 20,000 Alliance members in the state. Mann was sympathetic to the organization's aims, some of which he had been espousing for years. He soon became one of its most prominent leaders. News reporters referred to him as the Alliance's "silver tongued orator."[27] It was Mann who organized the historic national convention which the Alliance held at Ocala in December of 1890. Out of that meeting came the famous populist platform known as the "Ocala Demands."[28] It called for the abolition of all national banks, establishment of a subtreasury plan which would provide farmers low-cost loans, regulation of railroads and trusts, direct popular election of United States Senators, coinage of unlimited amounts of silver, reform of the tariff system, and passage of a national graduated income tax. All were radical ideas for those times.

In the fall of 1890 the Alliance entered candidates in all of Florida's political races. Mann ran for the House, and it turned out to be one of his toughest races.

According to one historian it was a heated contest. Mann "had made a number of enemies in [Brooksville] because of the positions he took on the political issues of the day. . . . It was a bitter campaign with lots of mud slinging on both sides."[29] Despite an anti-Mann torchlight parade on election eve Austin won the election.

Over two-thirds of the 1891 legislators were Alliancemen and Mann was their leader. The legislative session was one of the stormiest on record. Wilkinson Call, Austin's old enemy, was up for reelection to the Senate. He was opposed by the railroad tycoon William D. Chipley and by Alliancemen, led by Mann. The two groups were uncomfortable "bedfellows"; only their opposition to Call united them. The pro- and con-Call forces actively debated his reelection. Mann's harsh laugh was often heard by the news reporters as it echoed above the din in the House. One of Mann's speeches was described as "a series of explosions."[30] The pro-Alliance Daily Floridian called him "the Hero of Hernando." After weeks of inconclusive wrangling and deadlocked votes Call's reelection was finally decided by an episode known as "Babes-in-the-Woods." Seeking to prevent a quorum, Mann persuaded more than a dozen legislators to go on a "picnic" the day a crucial vote was to be taken. They journeyed to Thomasville, Georgia, where they whiled away the time eating lunch and drinking cider. The ploy failed. The pro-Call men,

undaunted by the maneuver, called a joint session and declared a quorum of both houses and reelected their candidate. It was a bitter defeat for Mann and his Alliance followers.

Disillusioned with his fellow Democrats and disappointed that the party did not adopt the Alliance's platform at its 1892 state convention, Mann broke with the Democratic party. He joined the newly formed People's Party, or Populist Party, as it was more commonly called, and became its candidate for Congress. Mann and the Populists were branded as traitors by the Democrats. They were also opposed by almost every major newspaper in the state. The Jasper News derisively denounced Mann as "the chief hornblower [of a] scalaway circus."[31] He and the other Populists were soundly defeated in the election. The agrarian movement was over, and so was Austin Mann's political career. Earlier, when the Alliance's co-op programs had gone under, Mann had remarked that "we busted because we failed."[32] The statement, while simplistic, applied just as aptly to his defeat in 1892. He never again ran for public office although he continued to voice his unpopular and controversial views. He turned his interests elsewhere and began to work to improve Florida's road system and to develop the state's natural resources.

May observed firsthand the last stormy years of her father's political career. In 1890 she left St. Joseph's and

joined him in Brooksville. She helped him with his political campaign and with the arrangements of the Ocala convention. Late in 1890 her father introduced her to William Sherman Jennings, a judge from Brooksville who was an ambitious young man beginning to make a name for himself in Democratic party circles. Jennings was smitten with May, who had grown into a very attractive woman. Vivacious and charming, she was also Jennings' intellectual equal and she enjoyed politics as much as he did. They began to see each other often at political rallies, church socials, and cotillion dances. Soon he was calling at the Mann house to court her formally.

During part of the 1891 legislative session May assisted her father. They lived at the St. James hotel while in Tallahassee.[33] She attended House sessions and handled Mann's correspondence and appointments. She also acted as his hostess. Government buildings were considered male sanctuaries in those days, and May must have created something of a stir as she moved through the Capitol corridors and offices. She was small, slim, fashionably dressed, and she wore her hair in the flattering Gibson Girl style. She enjoyed politics, and her capabilities, enthusiasm, and ease in handling politicians and adjusting to their way of life were quickly noticed by her associates. She soon made friends with legislators, their wives, and other state officials.

Jennings frequently visited Tallahassee on business. He made it his business to see May as often as possible. There were many places to go. Tallahassee, with a population of 2,000, was an exciting community, particularly when the legislature was in session. There were parties, dinners and dances. Picnics at Hall Lake and concerts by the Tallahassee Silver Cornet Band provided entertainment. Quieter activities were also available. One local newspaper noted that, "the young folks of Tallahassee enjoy (the) lovely moonlight nights. Long (buggy) drives over the hard clay roads (on) cool, clear, nights arouse all the poetry in one's being."[34]

Sherman and May were married in Tallahassee on May 12, 1891. She was eighteen and he was twenty-nine. Tallahassee had never seen such an elegant wedding. The ceremony took place in the Methodist church (the Baptist church had recently burned down), with Mann giving his daughter away and the members of the Legislature standing in a body to escort the newlyweds down the aisle.[35] The local newspaper noted that the young couple departed the following day for St. Augustine, where they spent their honeymoon.[36] May's former schoolmates at St. Joseph commented on the marriage. They wrote with enthusiasm: "We extend our sincerest wishes to the newlyweds, and hope that as they glide over a silvery ocean of time, the tide of a just life may bear them to a heavenly felicity."[37]

May and Sherman were well suited to each other. Their partnership had been made, figuratively and literally, in the halls of government. Similar in background, education, and aspirations, their union proved to be very happy. They were to work side-by-side for the next thirty years, and it was fortunate for Florida that this happened. The young couple had set their goals. The future beckoned and before them lay fair Italy.

Notes to Chapter II

[1]St. Joseph Academy Roll, 1883, located in St. Joseph archives. The Mann girls' ages were erroneously listed as twelve and eight.

[2]Living Waters (St. Augustine, 1966), n.p.

[3]Sister Thomas Joseph McGoldrick, "The Contribution of the Sisters of St. Joseph of St. Augustine to Education, 1866-1960" (M.A. thesis, University of Florida, 1960), passim.

[4]Sister Mary Alberta, "A Study of the Schools Conducted by the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Diocese of St. Augustine, Florida, 1866-1940" (M.A. thesis, University of Florida, 1940), passim.

[5]The author was given a personal tour of the school by Sister Mary Albert Luzzier, February 19, 1978.

[6]May Jennings to Carrie McCollum, April 30, 1915. MMJ Papers, Box 5.

[7]Jane Quinn, The Story of a Nun: Jeanie Gordon Brown (St. Augustine, 1978), p. 68.

[8]Prospectus of St. Joseph's Academy (St. Augustine, 1890), n.p.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Quinn, Story of a Nun, p. 85.

[11]Florida Latimer, "Convent Life," Pascua Florida, XIV, February, 1903. Quoted in Quinn, Story of a Nun, p. 86-87.

[12]Edward Nelson Akin, "Southern Reflections of the Gilded Age: Henry M. Flagler's System, 1885-1913" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, 1975), passim.

[13]The St. Augustine Directory (St. Augustine, 1884), n.p.

[14]Pascua Florida, II, May 1889, p. 9.

[15]Biographical sketch of May Mann Jennings, 1919. MMJ Papers, Box 16.

[16]Prospectus of St. Joseph's Academy, 1890, n.p.

[17]Valedictory address. See Appendix I.

[18]Pascua Florida, II, June, 1891, p. 10.

[19]Ibid. Flyleaf. One such advertisement read "the Florida Orange and Vegetable Auction Company of Jacksonville, Florida. Over one-hundred dealers represented, A.S. Mann, President and Manager."

[20]Edward C. Williamson, "Independentism: A Challenge to the Florida Democracy of 1884," Florida Historical Quarterly, XXVII, July, 1948, p. 147.

[21]Edward C. Williamson, "The Constitutional Convention of 1885," Florida Historical Quarterly, XLI, October 1962, p. 116.

[22]Edward C. Williamson, Florida Politics in the Gilded Age: 1877-1893 (Gainesville, 1976), p. 137.

[23]Ibid., p. 183.

[24]Judge E.C. May, Gaters, Skeeters, and Malary: Recollections of a Pioneer Florida Judge (New York, 1953), p. 58.

[25]Ibid., p. 57.

[26]The newspaper was the Brooksville Register, whose editor was Cash Thomas. According to Stanaback's A History of Hernando County the paper was well written and won prizes at state fairs. See Stanaback, p. 171.

[27]Lloyd Walter Cory, "The Florida Farmer's Alliance: 1887-1892" (M.A. thesis, Florida State University, 1963), p. 41.

[28]James O. Knauss, "The Farmer's Alliance in Florida," The South Atlantic Quarterly, XXV, July, 1926, pp. 300-315.

[29]Stanaback, History of Hernando County, p. 129.

[30]Tallahassee Daily Floridian, April 12, 1891.

[31]Jasper News, August 12, 1892.

[32]Arnold M. Pavlovsky, "We Busted Because We Failed: Florida Politics, 1880-1908" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1973), p. 151.

[33]Tallahassee Weekly Floridian, April 8, 1891.

[34]Ibid., May 27, 1891.

[35]Biographical sketch of May Mann Jennings, 1919. MMJ Papers, Box 16.

[36]Tallahassee Daily Floridian, May 14, 1891.

[37]Pascua Florida, II, June, 1891, p. 10.

CHAPTER III
SHERMAN

William Sherman Jennings was destined for a distinguished career and would eventually be elected governor of Florida. His ascent within the Democratic party was one of the most meteoric in the state's history. Born March 24, 1863, at Walnut Hill, Marion County, Illinois, he was one of nine children.[1] His parents, longtime residents of the area, were Josephus Waters Jennings and Amanda Couch Jennings. Both were descended from colonial ancestors. Josephus Jennings was an attorney and for many years judge of the Marion County court.

Jennings attended local schools and in 1882 and 1883 he attended Southern Illinois Normal University at Carbondale. While there he served as a first sergeant in the Douglas Corps of Cadets.[2] Afterwards he went to Salem, Illinois, where he read law with his brother, Charles, and with his uncle, Silas Bryan, father of William Jennings Bryan, the "Great Commoner," and the man many historians recognize as the founder of the modern Democratic party. Bryan's father and Jennings' mother were brother and sister. Sherman, who was three years younger than Bryan, did not look much like his famous cousin, nor did he have his oratorical skills. Still, family members remarked how alike

the two were in physical build and in personal philosophy, political ideology, and religious beliefs. Bryan's wife, Mary, later wrote May, "our husbands are so alike in body and in mind."[3] This similarity would not be unexpected in men who shared a common ancestry and childhood. Throughout their lives the two cousins were close friends. There is little doubt that the relationship was an asset to Sherman's career, for on several occasions Bryan arrived in Florida to give Sherman's political career a boost. Three different times in the 1890s Bryan spoke in Brooksville, once from the balcony of the Jennings home.[4]

In 1885 Sherman attended Union Law School, where his brother and Bryan had received their legal training. This institution was one of the most distinguished in Illinois, but its facilities were unimpressive. Located in downtown Chicago, it was housed "in a single building and consisted of a solitary lecture room, an office shared by the dean and his faculty . . . (and) a roof garden (which) had been transformed into a library."[5]

After Jennings left the school he decided to move south. It is not known why he came to Florida or how he chose Brooksville as his new home, but he arrived in the little town in late 1885. He was twenty-two years of age. Pictures of him about this time show him to be a man of medium height and of stocky build. He had brown hair and eyes and he wore a prominent mustache. He dressed well and presented

a dignified appearance. He was reserved in his personal manner.

One amusing fact about his trip to Florida was later used against him in the heat of a campaign. He paid for his trip south working as a drummer, or salesman, for a patent medicine company. He was later accused of having arrived in the state on a medicine wagon "hawking snake oil." Jennings never denied the accusation and turned the information to his advantage. He stated that he was proud to have been a workingman who came from modest circumstances. Wasn't it the American way that a chap who was ambitious and hardworking could rise in station and become a leader of his fellowmen?

Jennings' intelligence and industriousness enabled him to succeed quicker than most men his age. In May of 1886, just a few months after his arrival in Brooksville, he was admitted to the Florida bar. Eventually he was practicing before the state Supreme Court.[6] In 1887 he was appointed court commissioner of the Sixth Judicial Circuit, and the following year was appointed county judge of Hernando County. A few months later he was elected to the same office for a full four-year term. As his involvement in local politics increased so did his influence and prestige within the Democratic party.

Jennings took an active part in Brooksville's and Hernando County's civic affairs. For several years he

served as a county commissioner and for a decade he was a city councilman. Eight of those years he was president of the council.[7] He also served as president of the Brooksville High School board of trustees, and held a commission as colonel in the Fifth Florida Regiment. One student remembered that the future governor frequently drove out to the high school in his buggy to drill the school boys in military tactics.[8] On March 5, 1890, he married Corinne Jordan, the daughter of a Brooksville merchant, but she died only a few months after the ceremony.[9]

When Jennings married May he found the ideal companion. Not only was she his intellectual equal but they shared common goals and aspirations. Both held a strong sense of noblesse oblige; community service was seen as a duty. High public and private standards were considered to be obligatory by those who considered themselves to be good citizens.

After their honeymoon, May and Sherman returned to Brooksville. In 1891 it was an attractive, bustling community of about 500 inhabitants. It had twenty stores, a newspaper, printing office, courthouse, Florida Southern Railway depot, and not a single paved street or sidewalk. There were many trees and in spring and summer the woods were filled with wild flowers. Agricultural enterprises formed the largest industry. Before the great freezes of 1894-1895 large orange, lemon, and grapefruit groves dotted

the hillsides. From Booksville alone "100,000 boxes (of citrus) were shipped annually."[10] Phosphate mines and timber added to the economy.

Brooksville was situated upon some of the most beautiful land in Florida. There were gently rolling hills which provided far distant vistas. The soil was rich and dark brown in color. Numerous hammocks harbored magnificent stands of hardwood trees. One visitor described the area as "the most un-Florida appearing place imaginable."[11] Brooksville especially appealed to Midwesterners for it reminded them in many ways of home, although one traveler said it resembled "western New York" state.[12] A land sales booklet, published in Chicago, stated that land near Brooksville was "as good as Illinois soil."[13] It also claimed that the area had "no snakes," a fact apparently comforting to citified Northerners.

May and Sherman built a large house in Brooksville and it became a center of social activity for the young married set of the community. A few months after their marriage an item in the local paper announced that "the frame of Judge Jennings' new residence looms upon Howell's Hill. It will be the handsomest residence in town."[14] The house was a large, white, two-story wood structure which had porches, lead glass doors, and balconies. One contemporary commented upon its attractiveness and spacious grounds. It was noted by the same observer that, "Mrs. Jennings, as well

as her husband, takes great pride in keeping (the) home in the most excellent and inviting condition. She carefully superintends in person every detail of home management."[15] May enjoyed the outdoors and worked energetically in her yard. Her home was surrounded by flowers and trees and vegetable gardens. She also had chickens and a cow to care for. An observer described her domestic proclivities as follows: "While (Mrs. Jennings') many graces of mind and person eminently qualify her to preside over the social functions incident to her exalted position, she is at the same time more domestic than many a farmer's wife, and loves her poultry, her garden and her flowers."[16]

May spent much of her time making dress patterns and often employed a seamstress; she was fashion conscious and liked to wear the latest styles. Though small of stature, she was always dignified in her appearance; contemporaries remembered that she stood ramrod straight and carried her head high. Her bearing was perhaps the result of her training in "refined deportment" which she had received at St. Joseph's Academy. She never appeared in public without wearing gloves and a hat, even years later, after styles had been modified and were less formal. Her hats, usually large and decorated with bright bows and flowers, became her trademark. She was not an imperious woman, and her manner was never arrogant. Although self-confident and not afraid to speak her own mind, she was not over-bearing.

She was well liked and had many friends. Later, there were many followers and emulaters.

May and Sherman were Brooksville's most active couple. For ten years they busied themselves with the political, civic, business, and social activities of the community. In November of 1893, their only child, Sherman Bryan Jennings, was born. He received the devoted love and attention of his parents. As he grew up he was taken into their confidences and was excluded from few of their activities. As her father had treated her, so did May relate to her own son. Next to her husband, her son was to become one of her closest allies and friends. It was noted that the Jennings treated Bryan "like a dear chum" rather than a son.[17]

The Jennings were active members in Brooksville's First Baptist Church. Since Sherman had moved to Florida he had publicly identified himself as a Baptist. In 1889 he attended the eighth annual convention of the Florida Sunday School Association and pledged $25.00 to its support.[18] For many years he held church offices, including the vice-presidency of the Florida Baptist Convention and membership on the Baptist State Board of Missions. He also served as a trustee of Stetson University.[19] In the Brooksville church he was a deacon and a Sunday school teacher. When the church burned in 1899, Sherman and May led the drive to raise building funds.[20] Because of their Baptist beliefs neither ever smoked tobacco nor drank alcohol. Both were sympathetic to the temperance movement.

Jennings was elected to the state legislature in 1892 and again in 1894. In the 1893 House of Representatives he served on the finance and taxation, judiciary, and constitutional amendments committees. He was chairman of public health and rules. He was well liked by his colleagues and was viewed as one of the ablest young men in the state. During the 1895 legislative session he served as speaker of the House. It was a responsible and powerful position and he garnered many friends and admirers at that time. The following year, Jennings was elected a presidential elector on the Bryan-Sewall ticket. By 1898, when he served as chairman of the Democratic state convention at Ocala, his name had become recognized throughout the state.

During the 1890s Jennings built up a busy and lucrative law practice. His professional card read "W.S. Jennings, Atty. at Law, Solicitor in Chancery. Office in the Bank Building."[21] His business interests included ownership and management of several citrus groves, including a sizable operation near Leesburg; organization and management of the Brooksville Orange Company; and vice-presidency of the Brooksville State Bank. He also added to his own real estate holdings. By 1900 Jennings could be regarded as a man of substantial wealth.

While her husband's political and fiscal fortunes were on the ascendancy, May was also making a name for herself. She became one of Brooksville's most active

clubwomen. Although she worked to enhance her husband's career, she always reserved time to pursue her own interests, mainly club and community work. Her involvement in these activities increased over the years. Eventually she would become a recognized state leader. It is likely that she helped organize Brooksville's first woman's club, the Whittier Club (later the Ladies' Improvement Association), for she was its recognized leader. Intelligent and articulate, she was too interested in political and civic matters to remain uninvolved. Notices similar to the following began to appear with regularity, "The Ladies' Improvement Association will meet at Mrs. W.S. Jennings', Thursday the 31st."[22]

The women involved themselves in numerous charitable and civic activities. One irritating public problem which concerned the Brooksville women was the nuisance created by the town's lack of a fence law. Livestock roamed everywhere; animals slept in the streets, doorways, and on private lawns. It was a familiar Florida problem, common to all towns and was to plague the state for many years. In Brooksville it was such an annoyance that on several occasions city emergency action was taken and men were employed to "chase down and capture the animals."[23] The ladies kept pressuring city officials (in many cases their own husbands) to do something about the matter which was becoming also a health menance. Meetings were held and letters to the editor appeared frequently. One writer asked, "Can you tell me

why we have to run the risk of breaking our necks over a lot of sleeping cows everytime we go out?"[24]

The problem created by free-roaming livestock was of such magnitude and so pervasive that when the clubwomen in the state formally organized the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs in 1895, it was the first major issue they addressed.[25] It also proved to be one of the most controversial and one of the longest. For more than fifty years women fought to remedy this situation, and May Jennings was one of the leaders in this battle.

In 1899 she turned her attention away from clubwork to help her husband achieve his goal of being elected governor of Florida. She had attended the previous three Democratic state conventions as well as the 1893 and 1895 legislative sessions. She had worked for her husband as she had earlier supported her father; now she realized she would have the opportunity to put her political knowledge and organizational skills to work for a cause personally dear to her. She would work hard but very much enjoy the months that lay ahead.

That she was one of Jennings' great political assets was recognized by many. One newpaper wrote, "There is little doubt that the rise of young Jennings was promoted by his marriage to May Mann, a lady of great charm (who) inherited much of her father's political ability. She was just such a person who would impress all those who came in contact

with her, just such a one as would prove a most fitting helpmeet (sic) to a husband who had both ability and political ambitions."[26]

Another contemporary noted that May had acquired "from her gifted and confiding father a keen interest in public affairs (and was) from girlhood equipped for the brilliant social career which is offered to the wife of an ambitious, able and influential public man. . . . Jennings owes much of his subsequent success at the bar and in the field of politics to the keen intelligence and winning tact of his wife (who) takes a very intelligent interest in political affairs. The advancement of her husband . . . is very near and dear to her heart. Her modest and unassuming manner stops her from claiming any credit . . . but it is certain that he owes much to her excellent judgment and untiring efforts in his behalf."[27]

From the time Jennings joined the Democratic party he had been identified with its liberal, anti-Bourbon wing. He was never regarded as a radical "wool hatter" as his controversial father-in-law had been; he was seen by many as a middle-of-the-road moderate. Nevertheless, he was a progressive as it was defined in early twentieth-century American political history. Other liberals of his generation included Congressman Stephen Mallory, Frank Pope, Duncan Fletcher, United States Senator Wilkinson Call, B.H.

Palmer, and the Jacksonville "straightouts," John N.C. Stockton, J.M. Barrs, and Napoleon Bonaparte Broward.

The liberals opposed the party conservatives and the so-called "silk hat" railroad and corporate kingpins who, since the end of Reconstruction, had orchestrated and benefited from Florida's version of "the great American barbecue," in which the resources and rewards of the state were controlled by a small business elite, known as the Bourbons.[28] This conservative faction included William D. Chipley, James Taliaferro, Ziba King, William D. Bloxham, Henry B. Plant, F.A. Hendry, and Henry M. Flagler. The two sides clashed over state land grant policy, railroad regulation, state funding and taxation, political patronage, and nomination and election reforms.

For more than twenty years the two sides were to fight for control of the state. The tumultuous 90s had witnessed the rise and demise of the Populists and the bitter battles over Senator Call's elections. It also saw skirmishes over railroad regulation and election reforms. These confrontations had finally resulted in such diffusion and dilution of power within the Florida Democratic party that, as one historian noted, "no single interest (could) control Florida politics."[29] It was everyman for himself.[30] The party developed into a formless union of "warring, amorphous personal factions."[31] In 1900 the party's nominations seemed wide open. It would be the last time that the

nominating convention would be utilized to select nominees for state office. Henceforth, nominations would result from the primary system. In 1900 the Democratic nomination would go to the man who could corral the most delegates prior to the party convention. In a one-party state like Florida, nomination was tantamount to election. The time seemed right for an ambitious and relatively fresh newcomer. Sherman Jennings decided to enter the race.

The effort would not be easy. There was no pervasive state political machine, as there were in other southern states, but Jennings felt that he had as good as chance as any other political hopeful. He had quietly sent out inquiries to friends around the state asking for an assessment of his chances. The replies were encouraging. In the spring of 1899 he and May journeyed to Tallahassee and while there they dined with Governor and Mrs. Bloxham. Whether they revealed Sherman's intentions is not known, but when they returned to Brooksville they began to prepare for the pre-convention campaign. Aware that he was at a disadvantage because he was a Northerner by birth and had not served in the Civil War, Jennings was determined to lessen these handicaps. In June he purchased a copy of George R. Fairbank's newly-published History of Florida, and began to learn as much as he could about the history of his adopted state.[32] He did not intend to be unprepared or appear ignorant about the state he sought to govern. He subscribed

to the Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, the states' most influential newspaper. He composed a biographical sketch of himself, sat for a formal photograph, and gave an interview to a reporter representing the Atlanta Constitution. He also purchased a new surrey and a pair of sleek horses.[33]

In the beginning May acted as campaign manager; she helped devise strategy and organized the letter and mailing operations. Sherman later appointed George C. Martin, a Brooksville attorney and a prominent party official, as his manager. A circular letter was sent to every county asking for precinct information and the names of local delegates. According to one writer Jennings was the last Florida "gubernatorial hopeful to sit on his front porch and conduct his pre-convention canvass by mail."[34] Despite the restrained tone of this campaign, as compared with later ones in Florida history, Jennings did some personal politicking, but he combined it with legitimate business travels. Late in 1899 he was appointed to the Democratic state executive committee. This was a boon to his candidacy for it gave him greater exposure and allowed him to keep tabs on the other gubernatorial hopefuls.

Jennings was supported by delegates throughout Florida, but most of his strength came from the central and southwest portions of the state. His supporters represented all segments of the population. His earliest backers included men like Asa Roberts, Desota County editor; J.F. Dorman,

Suwanee County tax collector; Herbert F. Drane, Lakeland insurance agent and party official; and Frank M. Simonton, a powerful Tampa political personality.

While her husband traveled around the state May remained in Brooksville and ran the law office, which also served as campaign headquarters. She supervised all the correspondence. It was a prodigious task, but she proved capable and efficient. One contemporary wrote that she organized and executed "the hardest and most fatiguing, yet quite the most important work of the struggle (and) the masterly manner in which she handled the mass of correspondence and routine work of the campaign (could) be attested to by hundreds of prominent Floridians."[35]

The pre-convention slate was so crowded with candidates that the Florida Times-Union published numerous front page cartoons which poked fun at the plethora of gubernatorial aspirants.[36] Much of the campaign seemed to be conducted through the newspapers. It was lackluster, and seemed to generate little interest or enthusiasm. One paper lamented the "scarcity of state political news," while another declared that "the people (were) tired of politics."[37] Only Jennings' campaign managed to create any excitement when his famous cousin William Jennings Bryan visited the state. In February of 1900, Bryan spent four days in Brooksville. He gave one speech from the balcony of the

Jennings' home. His visit received wide press coverage in the state and proved to be a publicity bonanza for Sherman's candidacy.

The real campaign took place, not in the newspapers, but in the county conventions where delegates for the state meetings were chosen. The local caucuses were generally volatile affairs as the various candidates finagled and maneuvered to secure delegates. By the time the state convention convened in Jacksonville on June 19, 1900, the slate had been reduced to five recognized candidates, although the counties had selected only 115 instructed delegates out of a possible 282. The Deland Record declared that "so many of the counties are sending uninstructed delegates that what will be the convention's will is simply guesswork."[38] Another paper ran a banner headline telling the public to "Pay your money--Take your choice."[39]

The candidates, in addition to Sherman, were Fred T. Myers, Leon County state senator; James D. Beggs, Orange County judge; William H. Milton, Jr., Jackson County committeeman and son of Florida's Civil War governor; and Danette H. Mays, Jefferson County legislator. All were more politically conservative than Sherman. Jennings was considered to have a slight advantage over the others. The Tampa Tribune, which endorsed him, wrote: "The political signs of the times point almost invariably to Jennings (whose)

strength has proved a revelation to his opponents and a little surprising even to his friends."[40]

The 1900 convention has been described as one of "the most remarkable political conventions ever held in Florida."[41] It was certainly one of the rowdiest and most tumultuous. It met in Jacksonville's new Emory Auditorium, which had been specially outfitted with electric lights and grandstands to hold the more than 2,000 people who attended. There were fewer than 300 delegate votes. The hall was decorated with potted ferns and palms, 1,500 yards of red, white, and blue bunting, and large pictures of famous past Democratic party greats. "A giant portrait of Willian Jennings Bryan gazed benignly from the back wall of the rostrum."[42] A band was hired to entertain the spectators and delegates during lulls in the sessions.

Jacksonville was almost overwhelmed by the event. The town was flooded with delegates and thousands of curiosity seekers, including a few unsavory types. The local press was provided with plenty of colorful copy. When the Tampa delegation arrived, a reporter covering the event noted that "one of the features of the trip (had been) Colonel F.A. Salmonson, and his famous fighting gamecock 'Fred' . . . one-eyed and generally disreputable looking as any bird that ever came to the city . . . (who the) colonel insisted on having crow at every station on the way up."[43]

Delegates were provided with free streetcar passes and free excursions on the St. Johns River and to Pablo Beach. They were also invited to a "smoker," which, according to one report proved to be "a howling success."[44] Dances were held every evening in the city's hotels, and there were many dinner parties, receptions, and soirees in private homes. It was advertised that "no tickets were required to admit ladies to the hall at anytime."[45] Reporters noted the "faithful attendance of the fair sex," whose "flashing colors (and) bright costumes but added to the brilliancy of the scene."[46] May attended every session, sometimes accompanied by some of the wives of Hernando delegates, and other occasions by Mrs. Napoleon Bonaparte Broward, wife of the prominent Duval politician who was a close friend.

Although Jennings was conceded to be the favorite--he had the largest number of committed votes and the support of the most important newspapers--the nomination was by no means guaranteed. When the convention was opened he had twenty-nine committed votes; Beggs, Mays, Meyers, and Milton had twenty-eight, twenty-seven, twenty, and eleven votes respectively. The nomination required a total of 188 votes. Whoever came out as winner was going to have to do some compromising and "horsetrading."

The Jennings party had reservations at the Windsor Hotel, which was reported to be the convention's "storm center . . . its lobbies and piazzas crowded until late

hours."[47] Liberals and conservatives, businessmen and farmers, citizens from Tallahassee and Jacksonville, and all over Florida vied for control of the convention. The Hernando County delegates, who strongly endorsed Jennings had only one-sixteenth a vote each. This, as opposed to one-fifth, one-fourth, one-half, and one vote per man in the other delegations, caused quite a stir. It was reported that "Jennings' fractionalization plan was a puzzle to the politicians, a source of deep regret, and established a new and ingenious method of preventing losses except in immaterial fractions."[48] It created a stable base on which to build convention support. "Jennings' opponents tried to sabotage his candidacy by drawing attention to his Northern origins and alleging he was named for the hated Yankee general William Tecumseh Sherman. Jennings was also accused of engaging in 'south-hating antics.' The 'Bloody Shirt' of the Civil War and Reconstruction was still being waved."[49] The charges failed to sway many of the Jennings supporters.

The first two days of the convention were taken up with choosing a chairman, drawing-up a platform, endorsing the 1896 National Democratic platform, and nominating minor candidates. The business of choosing a gubernatorial nominee began the third day. Jennings was nominated by C.M. Brown of Marion County and seconded by J.H. Curry and General Allen Thomas of Hillsborough County. Eight votes were taken, and Jennings' total climbed to 81. Myers trailed with

76 1/2 votes. It was exhausting for the secretaries who "were taxed in calling and announcing the votes (and) in the constant work of listening for the faintly heard answers . . . from the far ends of the hall and in footing the long columns of scores." They were "all heartily glad of the relief that came with adjournment."[50]

Balloting continued on the fourth, and as it turned out, the final day of the convention. Only once did Jennings trail. The climax came in the late afternoon. The hall was filled to capacity, every seat was occupied, and people stood up in the back and thronged the corridors. It was hot, and the delegates were tired. The roll calls seemed endless; everyone awaited the final outcome. Several times during the day rumors swept the hall, causing "the convention (to) become wild with excitement and confusion."[51] By the thirtieth ballot there was so much noise and confusion that the band was called upon to play so as to restore order. At 6 p.m., when the chair declared a suppertime recess, Jennings had 130 votes and Mays 122 1/2.

Shortly after the convention reconvened, the deadlock was broken. Mays arose and solemnly announced his withdrawal. There were a few seconds of silence, and then the delegates realized that the expected break had come, and there was a mad scramble to switch votes. The hall was a sea of confusion. On the forty-third ballot Beggs withdrew, and the final obstacle was removed. On the next ballot,

cast at 10 p.m., the Leon County delegation threw its support to Jennings and he was over the top. He had 192 votes, and was declared the nominee.

The delegates and spectators broke into cheers. May, and the ladies with her, applauded. Chaos reigned. "Delegates left their places and crowded around the nominee's chair. . . . He was lifted to the shoulders of a dozen stalwarts and carried the length of the hall."[52] Not everyone, as it turned out was happy; Mrs. Mays, who was seated in the gallery, was overheard to remark, "Anybody can be governor of Florida these days, even a jack rabbit. All you have to do is wag your ears and you are chosen."[53]

In a brief acceptance speech Jennings pledged his commitment to the party's platform. He viewed his nomination as "an honor and sacred responsibility."[54] When the final gavel of the convention sounded at 4 a.m., only a few delegates remained in the hall. "The band, worn out with the labors of the day and night, were stretched on chairs sound asleep or lolling about waiting with hardly concealed impatience for the last tune."[55]

How did Jennings win the nomination? What broke the deadlock and why did Mays withdraw from the race? Why did the Leon County delegation switch its vote? Did Henry Flagler and the railroads buy the convention? These were some of the questions being asked almost before the convention was formally ended. It was speculated that Jennings

and Mays, a corporate man, had made some kind of deal during the 6:00 recess. It does seem likely that Mays would not have withdrawn at that time unless he thought he would reap some benefits for himself by that action. Yet, despite the historical surmises and curiosity, no evidence of a deal has ever been uncovered. The puzzles and questions still remain.

J.D. Beggs later wrote Jennings to congratulate him and concede that he had been "fairly and honorably nominated."[56] But Herbert Drane saw the convention as "the hardest most vindictive fight ever."[57] J.M. Barrs felt that "for the first time in many years (the convention) was truly democratic and thoroughly representative of the people . . . many of those who had hereto dominated the party (did) not enter the convention hall during any of its sessions."[58] Two modern students of Florida politics wrote that "the 1900 convention was significant because it pointed out how difficult it had been to keep factionalism within the bounds of the convention system (with) party leaders (being) badly divided over Jennings' candidacy (some) clearly feeling that he was too progressive and too much a Yankee to be their gubernatorial candidate. The forty-four ballots had established a record."[59] Perhaps Jennings was nominated for no more sinister a reason than that he was the only middle-of-the-road candidate both sides could accept.

The Jennings nomination was celebrated by liberals and progressives throughout Florida. The "silk hats" had been defeated, or at least it seemed that way for the moment. A new era was beginning. One supporter wrote the new nominee, "I thank God the old fossil (bourbonism) in Florida is dead. Now we trust to have new blood, new ideas."[60]

When the news of Jenning's nomination reached Brooksville it touched off a wild celebration. The Jennings party was met at the train station by practically the whole population and with the firing of "Roman candles, firecrackers, and even .38 calibre guns. . . . The skies (were) aglow with happiness and hilarity." A carriage drawn by two horses and carrying onlookers to the festivities "ran away" and dumped all its occupants out on the street.[61] The celebrating continued for several days.

In August, Sherman, May and son Bryan, now six years old, traveled to Illinois for a rest and to visit relatives. Jennings attended the National Democratic convention in Indianapolis, and was present when his cousin Bryan won his second presidential nomination. When the Jennings family returned to Florida they began preparations for the fall campaign. Austin Mann, now fifty-three, wrote to his son-in-law offering his services. He could "bring up (his) Alliance Forces" if Sherman needed them. The offer was quietly declined.[62]

Although the Democratic nomination was tantamount to election, it was deemed important to the ticket for the candidates to campaign. An elaborate and exhaustive itinerary was put together. In addition to Jennings, the party's nominees included John L. Crawford, secretary of state; William B. Lamar, attorney general; James B. Whitfield, state treasurer; William N. Sheats, superintendent of public instruction; Benjamin McLin, commissioner of agriculture; William H. Reynolds, comptroller, J. D. Morgan, railroad commissioner; and Stephen M. Sparkman and Robert W. Davis, for Congress. Jennings' two opponents were Republican Matthew B. MacFarlane and Populist A. M. Morton, neither of whom was considered a threat.

The Florida platform called for the adoption of a state primary law, municipal ownership of utilities, improvement of public roads, reorganization of the state supreme court, reform of public roads, reform of the convict lease system, and support of the railroad commission.[63] Jennings wanted the state to increase the responsibilities of the State Board of Health, adopt free school textbooks, and equalize assessments and taxes. Two issues dominated the campaign; a referendum on removal of the Capitol from Tallahassee and a proposal for teacher examinations. Four cities vied for the Capitol site. They were Tallahassee, Jacksonville, St. Augustine, and Ocala. Each community lobbied vigorously

making charges and promises in the attempt to win the coveted prize. The new teachers' certification program was lost in the debate that swirled around its sponsor, William N. Sheats. Jennings had approved the teachers' examination, but he was noncommittal concerning the Capitol site.

The campaign was launched at Miami in September. It was Jennings' first visit to the city, and he was favorably impressed. For over a month and a half he and the other Democratic candidates toured the state giving speeches, attending receptions, eating barbecue, and meeting with voters. They traveled by boat, buggy, and train. In fifty-three days fifty-three towns and every Florida county was visited. Although the travel and speaking were fatiguing Jennings enjoyed the campaign. At Crystal River he sang with a quartet, and it was reported that he had a "fine tenor voice."[64] At Ocala he toured Silver Springs. In Defuniak Springs his host told the crowd that "Florida had had the ugliest Governor in the Union, she was now to have one of the handsomest."[65] During each speech Sherman made it a point to recognize the ladies in the audience. At Pensacola he remarked that "women were more interested in good government than any other class of citizens."[66] Reporters noted that on more than one occasion "nearly every lady in the audience went up and shook" his hand.[67] Thus, it seemed that even though May was not on the campaign

trail with him, her presence and spirit evidently traveled with him.

The campaign was dull and created little real news. Jennings stuck to the issues as had been expected. He seldom if ever mentioned his opponents. Of course, there was no real need to. Macfarlane, however, had much to say about the Democratic nominee. He called Jennings a Yankee, a carpetbagger, and a "snake oil salesman." It was also claimed that the only reason he had received the nomination was because he was William Jennings Bryan's cousin.

Election day was November 6. Sherman, May and their friends waited for the returns in Brooksville. There was little doubt about the outcome. As expected, all of the Democratic candidates won. The vote in the governor's race was Jennings 29,251, MacFarlane 6,248, and Morton 631.[68] It was one of the largest Democratic victories in Florida political history; Jennings received eighty-one percent of the total vote. Tallahassee won reaffirmation as the state Capitol. The Democratic party was not as fortunate nationally as it had been in Florida. William Jennings Bryan, and his running mate, Adlai Stevenson, were defeated by McKinley and Roosevelt. Once again the "Great Commoner" was denied the presidency. Jennings received a kind congratulatory note from his defeated cousin who urged him to be "a Jeffersonian and an equal rightist" and ended his letter with the despondent line, "well at least I can be known as the cousin of a governor."[69]

May had never been happier or prouder of her husband. She could hardly restrain her anticipation and enthusiasm as she began to make plans for the move to Tallahassee. Four years of political duty and personal pleasure lay ahead.

Notes to Chapter III

[1]A.B. Caldwell, editor, Makers of America: Florida Edition (Atlanta, 1911), IV, p. 252.

[2]Cadet certificates in the possession of Dorothy Jennings Sandridge.

[3]Mary Bryan to May Jennings, February 28, 1920. In the possession of Dorothy Jennings Sandridge.

[4]Brooksville Sun, June 27, 1952.

[5]Louis W. Koenig, Bryan: A Political Biography of William Jennings Bryan (New York, 1971), p. 39.

[6]Florida Bar certificates in possession of Dorothy Jennings Sandridge.

[7]James H. Jones, History of Brooksville City Government (Brooksville, 1965), n.p.

[8]John R. Willis to May Jennings, February, 1920. In possession of Dorothy Jennings Sandridge.

[9]James H. Jones, Genealogical Record of Legal Marriages in Hernando County for the Period, 1877-1890, n.p.

[10]Sunnylands: A Florida Monthly Magazine, III, August, 1901, p. 109.

[11]Barbour, Florida for Tourists, p. 58.

[12]Oliver Marvin Crosby, Florida Facts (New York, 1887), p. 101.

[13]Brooksville Board of Trade, A Book of Facts for Those Seeking New Locations in the South (Chicago, 1909), p. 6.

[14]Brooksville The Hernando News, July 25, 1891.

[15]Undated and unidentified newspapers clipping. Jennings Scrapbook No. 1, 1901. WSJ Papers.

[16]Gainesville Daily Sun, June 11, 1901.

[17]Biographical sketch of May Mann Jennings, 1919. MMJ Papers, Box 19.

[18]Minutes of the Eighth Annual Convention of the Florida Sunday School Association (Ocala, 1889), p. 24.

[19]Harry C. Garwood, Stetson University and Florida Baptists (Deland, Florida, 1962), p. 78; Jack P. Dalton, "A History of Florida Baptists" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, 1952), passim.

[20]Brooksville Sun, November 28, 1952.

[21]Brooksville The Hernando News, July 25, 1891.

[22]Brooksville News Register, January 23, 1895.

[23]Stanaback, History of Hernando County, p. 62.

[24]Brooksville The Hernando News, August 22, 1891.

[25]Blackman, The Women of Florida, I, p. 130.

[26]William T. Cash, The Story of Florida (New York, 1938), II, p. 520.

[27]Undated and unidentified newspaper clipping. Jennings Scrapbook No. 1, 1901. WSJ Papers.

[28]Williamson, Florida Politics in the Gilded Age, passim.

[29]Ibid., p. 187.

[30]V.O. Key, Jr., Southern Politics in State and Nation (New York, 1949), p. 82.

[31]Pavlovsky, "We Busted Because We Failed," p. 215.

[32]The book, costing $1.25, was ordered from Drew and Co., Jacksonville, June 17, 1899. WSJ Papers, Box 3.

[33]William S. Jennings to Elkhart Carriage Company, October 24, 1899. WSJ Papers, Box 3.

[34]Pavlovsky, "We Busted Because We Failed," p. 230.

[35]Undated and unidentified newspaper clipping. Jennings Scrapbook No. 1, 1901. WSJ Papers.

[36]Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, April 9, 1900, April 15, 1900, April 29, 1900, May 6, 1900.

[37]Palatka Advertiser, April 30, 1900; Tampa Times, May 10, 1900.

[38]Deland Volusia County Record, May 17, 1900.

[39]Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, May 27, 1900.

[40]Tampa Tribune, May 28, 1900.

[41]Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, June 24, 1900.

[42]Samuel Proctor, Napoleon Bonaparte Broward: Florida's Fighting Democrat (Gainesville, 1950), p. 161.

[43]Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, June 19, 1900.

[44]Ibid., June 22, 1900.

[45]Ibid., June 19, 1900.

[46]Ibid., June 20, 1900.

[47]Ibid., June 18, 1900.

[48]Ibid.

[49]David Colburn and Richard K. Scher, "Florida Gubernatorial Politics in the Twentieth Century" (Unpublished MS.), p. 104.

[50]Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, June 12, 1900.

[51]Ibid.

[52]Ibid.

[53]Proctor, Broward, p. 163.

[54]Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, June 22, 1900.

[55]Ibid., June 24, 1900.

[56]J.D. Beggs to William S. Jennings, July 5, 1900. WSJ Papers, Box 4.

[57]Herbert Drane to William S. Jennings, June 25, 1900. WSJ Papers, Box 4.

[58]John M. Barrs, Some A.D. 1900 Democratic Platforms in Florida (Jacksonville, 1900), n.p.

[59]Colburn and Scher, "Florida Gubernatorial Politics," p. 104.

[60]John H. Lee to William S. Jennings, June 23, 1900. WSJ Papers, Box 4.

[61]E.R. Russell, Brooksville As I First Knew It (Brooksville, 1962), n.p.

[62]A.S. Mann to William S. Jennings, August 22, 1899. WSJ Papers, Box 3.

[63]Barrs, Some A.D. 1900 Democrats Platforms, n.p.

[64]Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, October 4, 1900.

[65]Ibid., September 20, 1900.

[66]Ibid., September 21, 1900.

[67]Ibid., September 5, 1900.

[68]William Jennings Bryan to William S. Jennings, October 15, 1900. WSJ Papers, Box 5.

CHAPTER IV
THE GOVERNOR'S LADY

As the 1901 Florida gubernatorial inauguration approached an air of optimism and excitement permeated the state. The people who arrived in the capital city for the event seemed happier and more enthusiastic than past inaugural crowds. The state was installing a man of youth, vitality, and new ideas. Floridians, at least those concerned with political matters, were satisfied. A new century had been ushered in. The state was recovering from the calamitous freezes of 1894, 1895, and 1898. Yellow fever was being brought under control. Tourism was booming. Personal income was up. The state's population was growing. Floridians believed that their state was on the threshold of a new era of development and progress. A confident future lay ahead. William Sherman Jennings, only thirty-seven at the time, and youngest governor up to that date, seemed to personify that future for Florida.

The years that Sherman and May served as governor and First Lady would parallel many great events and changes in the history of America and the world. Between 1900 and 1905 the Boer War in South Africa and the Philippine campaign would be concluded. Queen Victoria would pass away, and with her Europe's and the western world's stability.

President McKinley would be assassinated, and his successor, Theodore Roosevelt, would stamp his own personality on the country's political thought. Marie Curie would win the Nobel Prize, and the equations of Einstein and Planck would turn topsy-turvy the very laws of the universe. The automobile would begin to revolutionaize transportation and the Wright brother's "flying machine" would prove that man indeed could fly and that most of the world would one day be only hours or minutes away. It would be a time of science and invention, of wonder and amazement.

These first years of the twentieth century would also be a time of optimism and idealism, of questioning, reflection, and reform. America would begin to discover its conscience and would try to bring to reality some of the promises of the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. Some Americans would begin to see things as they should be rather than as they were. The "public weal" would become society's watchwords, and reformation and redress would issue from every hall of government. As a reaction to the social and economic abuses of the "gilded age" a new ideology would develop which would accord to government a bigger role in its citizens' lives.

During this time, reformers, North and South, would call for the establishment of primary elections; direct election of United States Senators; adoption of the Australian ballot; the right to initiative, referendum, and recall;

public ownership of utilities; more vigorous regulation and curtailment of monopolies and trusts; laws regulating the drug and food industries; regulation of female and child labor; reform of public education, adoption of a national income tax; abolition of the poll tax; abolishment of the convict-lease system; improvement of roads and highways; and the adoption of the commissioner-manager type of city government. Later generations would look back and label this period the "progressive era."

Sadly, progressivism would coincide with a movement which would deny many American citizens their political and civil rights. Jim Crow would emerge full flower out of the same political cauldron which produced reforms. The Jennings administration would be one of Florida's most liberal governments but on the race question it would join the conservative Southern majority. Blacks would be seen as intellectual and moral inferiors and be deemed useful and competent only when in the charge of whites. They would continue to live in poverty and in ignorance, inadequately paid and housed, uneducated, and with a shockingly high mortality rate. For poor whites it was also a time of economic oppression and hardship. They too were illiterate and uncultured. Hookworm and rickets would attack their children, and the poll tax would keep the adults away from the ballot box.

Despite the prevailing attitude toward blacks, the Jennings would befriend many of them, and in later years

May would be viewed by blacks as an important friend and ally. But in 1901 white supremacy prevailed, and the Jennings lived by the accepted code. One of Sherman's first acts as governor would be to sign into law a bill establishing a "white's only" political primary system in Florida. The new law would be hailed by progressives as necessary and forward looking even though it closed the door in the South to black involvement in the political process. In 1901, when Booker T. Washington dined with President Roosevelt at the White House, Governor Jennings remarked to the newspapers that the event only encouraged "the Negro to demand a social equality that (could) not be granted him," and that he "personally regretted the (White House) matter exceedingly."[1]

To the Jennings and other southern liberals, physical freedom for blacks would be tolerated, equality and full civil rights would not. One historian put it succinctly when he wrote, "(progressives) did not envision racial tolerance or political equality for the Negro. The gifts of Jeffersonian democracy were to be accorded only to the white population."[2] Nevertheless, the Jennings years would provide Florida with a generally progressive government. Sherman and May would look back with pride at their accomplishments and years in Tallahassee.

The Jennings inaugural took place on January 8, 1901. The family, which consisted of Sherman, May, eight year old

Bryan, Sherman's mother, Amanda, and the Manns, Austin, Alsina, Grace, and Austin, Jr., arrived in Tallahassee several days prior to the inaugural. They stayed at the elegant Leon Hotel where ten rooms had been reserved for them. In addition to family members, hundreds of friends and political acquaintances took rooms at the Leon, the St. James, and at other city hostelries.

In the week prior to the inaugural visitors began arriving in Tallahassee. Some came to participate in the festivities, others only to observe an exciting state event. Each incoming train was filled to capacity. Reporters noted that although Tallahassee had a population of less than 3,000 people, triple that number had crowded into the capital during inaugural week. The community did its best to cope with the situation and to accommodate the multitudes. Dances, dinner parties, and public entertainments helped to keep the visitors busy, but they also visited the Capitol and other public buildings, and took carriage rides into the nearby countryside. By inaugural eve a carnival atmosphere pervaded the town; "the streets (being) thronged with handsome soldiers in bright uniforms accompanied by lovely women" all laughing and talking animatedly.[3]

Inaugural day was sunny and bright; it proved "delightful, fair and balmy, fitting for the first great event of the new century."[4] An impressive military parade led off the festivities. The procession, which formed behind

the Capitol building, commenced at 10:00 a.m., and proceeded slowly through the downtown district and back up to the east side of the Capitol. Marching were the Pensacola Brass Band, the Governor's Guard and military staff, fifteen colorful military units from around the state, and Florida's small but impressive naval militia. These units were followed by the official party and other dignitaries riding in open carriages. They included Governor Bloxham and Jennings, Mrs. Bloxham and May, cabinet officers and their wives, city officials, and a detachment of Confederate veterans who when they drove by wearing their uniforms were wildly applauded. The parade route was festooned with flags, colorful bunting, and posters, and was lined with hundreds of citizens who cheered with enthusiasm as each new unit passed by. The local newspaper hailed the inaugural as "a red letter day in the capital city's history," and described the parade as "a spectacle not soon forgotten."[5]

The oath of office was administered to the new governor on the east portico of the Capitol at high noon.[6] May, who was dressed in a black crepe de parís dress and a large, colorful hat, sat on the dais near her husband. She did not participate in the formal ceremony, but her presence was acknowledged by all the speakers. Chief Justice Fenwick Taylor administered the oath of office to Jennings who was dressed in a new black broadcloth suit which May had ordered from New York City. After presentation of the state seal

and remarks by Bloxham, Jennings delivered his inaugural address. It was read in a strong, forceful voice. Though written in ponderous prose and over 7,000 words in length, the speech was uplifting and optimistic in tone.[7] It was more than mere rhetoric; it outlined specific problems facing the state and offered concrete solutions. The new governor called for reform of the state's overcrowded and stalemated judicial system, establishment of uniform statewide property tax assessments, liberal support of public education, and rigorous enforcement of the state's health laws. The address was warmly applauded by the crowd.

At the conclusion of the formal ceremonies, the Jennings were escorted to the governor's chambers where they were greeted by the cabinet and other prominent state officials. At midafternoon May returned to the Leon Hotel to rest and to prepare for the evenings' events. Sherman, accompanied by a retinue of politicians and state dignitaries, walked over to Wayne Square for a barbecue and a review of the state troops. That evening a splendid reception and ball were held at the Leon. No formal invitations had been sent, and ordinary folk--"crackers," farmers, and small town businessmen--were observed rubbing elbows with high ranking state officials. The new governor was applauded by the state's newspapers for insisting upon a "people's inaugural."[8]

Hundreds of people jammed into the Leon, which was decorated, inside and out, with palms, bamboo, bunting and flowers. Entertainment included vocals and piano instrumentals by four Tallahassee ladies and dance music was provided by Chase's Orchestra brought in especially for the occasion from Jacksonville. A lavish buffet of "chicken salad, turkey, Maryland biscuits, coffee, and chocolat (sic)" helped to safisfy everyone's hunger.[9] May and Sherman received well-wishers in the hotel's east parlor until 10:00 p.m., at which time they were formally escorted into the ballroom, where they led off the grand march. They were a handsome couple. Sherman wore a new tuxedo, and May, only twenty-eight, was at the peak of her beauty. Her ballgown elicited much excitement. A friend wrote that "school girls studied fashion plates a solid week in order to understand the descriptions" of it.[10] May had spent months designing and making the gown. It cost $150, a lot of money in 1901, and was of "white satin crepe, embroidered in large white chrysanthemums, with plain crepe folds trimmed in lace."[11] She handmade the lace for the dress including a delicate little butterfly which she wore in her hair. Lacemaking was one of the domestic arts she had been taught by the French sisters at St. Joseph's. The affair, which included waltzes and two-steps, lasted until 2:00 a.m. It was reported to have been "one of the most magnificent balls Tallahassee had ever witnessed."[12]

The Jennings settled into a busy political and social routine in the state's capital. Since they had lived in the city before, they were quickly accepted by the local residents. They visited in the homes of many of the city's oldest families, and were frequently entertained by friends and political acquaintances. May was a hostess with extraordinary flair and verve, and whenever she entertained it usually elicited newspaper comment.

The Jennings played host to many distinguished national personalities who visited Florida. They included scientists like Thomas A. Edison, and industrialists like Ransom E. Olds, the founder of the town of Oldsmar. Even before the 1900 election Jennings had met Theodore Roosevelt who had presented May with an armful of red roses in repayment for her hospitality.[13]

During their stay in Tallahassee the Jennings occasionally attended local entertainments. Monroe's Opera House frequently booked traveling operas, roadshows, and concerts. These events, and others like "Lesley's All Girl Band" and "Miss Carrie Rouse, the Celebrated Whistler," were usually greeted by an enthusiastic, over-flowing audience. In 1901 Bryan Jennings was taken to see the circus which was visiting the town.

For the first two years of their stay in Tallahassee the Jennings resided at the Leon. In late 1902 they rented the elegant Cohen mansion, on McCarthy Street, which was

described as one of Tallahassee's "handsomest and most commodious residences."[14] It was a practical choice by May for Grace still lived with the family and the Manns were frequent visitors. Bryan Jennings was reluctant to leave the Leon, however, and years later he remembered the old hotel with fondness, especially its great central mahogany staircase with its "smooth-as-silk" banisters.[15] To an active and imaginative youngster those banisters had offered unlimited temptations.

May spent most of her time helping her husband. They worked together as a political team. She continued to serve as his closest confidant, and she was frequently a participant in informal political and policy discussions. May was deeply interested in the daily workings of her husband's administration, and he in turn respected her opinions. One contemporary called May the governor's "right hand man."[16] Another referred to her as Sherman's "trusted counselor."[17]

May had a winning style with politicians for she was intelligent and tactful as well as cheerful and gracious. She kept abreast of both state and national political events, and when required she could expound confidently upon current issues. She was a good debator; she was articulate and she did her "homework," reading extensively and talking to people. Tallahassee had witnessed few politically astute females, and she acquired a reputation for her political

knowledge. Her keen mind and political skills also garnered for her many admirers and friends.

When the legislature was in session she often helped out in the governor's office, greeting visitors, helping keep tabs on critical legislation, and aiding the staff with the many tasks required to keep the office running smoothly. The governor's personal secretary was Charles H. Dickinson, of Madison County, who had been clerk of the 1895 House, and who had held his county delegation firmly in the Jennings camp at the 1900 state convention.[18] Grace Mann was her brother-in-law's chief stenographer. She had worked earlier for him in his Brooksville law office. Her secretarial skills and knowledge of legal matters was so extensive that at one time Sherman attempted to get her admitted to the Florida bar, but, the "hue and cry" from this all-male organization reached such a crescendo that even the state's chief executive had to relent and abandon the idea. According to Grace's daughter she carried the disappointment with her for many years.[19]

Jennings proved to be one of Florida's ablest chief executives. He is described by historians as an activist governor although his personal style of leadership was quiet, dignified, and unassuming.[20] He was the first governor to truly challenge the Bourbons and the railroads and big business interests which controlled the state. He is credited with launching the progressive trend that Florida

gubernatorial politics followed the first two decades of this century.

When he came into office the state's finances and land policies were in a tangle. The state was in deep debt, and it had deeded away or granted more public land to railroads and corporations than even itself owned. There was a critical need for the state to reestablish its authority and control over the public domain. Sherman Jennings apparently was the right man for the job. He was honest and sincere, and he had an unblemished personal and political record. He was also a pragmatic, "hardnosed" fiscal conservative who possessed superior administrative and managerial skills. He had all the qualities needed to lead Florida back to economic soundness.

The Jennings administration established an impressive record. It increased state appropriations to higher education and provided aid to certain classes of high school and rural grade schools. It endorsed free textbooks. It established a State Auditing Department, and was responsible for the passage of the state's first bird protection and timber protection laws, the first pure food and drug law, the first law preventing cruelty to children, and a law raising the age of female consent from sixteen years of age to eighteen years of age. It was responsible for the enlargement and renovation of the Capitol building in 1902, and it reorganized the state court system which resulted

in the appointment of three new Supreme Court justices and additional circuit court judges. It reorganized the state militia. The governor supported the establishment of the primary system, and under his leadership Florida achieved the enviable feat of reducing taxes while at the same time increasing revenue. During the 1901 legislative session two bills were passed which benefited Austin Mann and his cronies. One extended the life of the Florida Grand Trunk Railroad grant to 1910 and the second gave an exclusive franchise, to operate any future shipcanal across Florida, to the Florida Ship Canal Company. Mann was a director in each of these enterprises. Neither company, however, ever profited by its privileged status.

In four years Jennings reduced the state's bonded debt by $1,032,000. By settling Florida's Indian War claims against the national government the state was able to pay off $132,000 in bonds and save $40,000 per year in interest, as well as receive a large cash settlement from Washington. Revenues from licenses, stamps, and minor taxes were increased. By reforming the state convict-lease system an additional $500,000 was brought into the treasury. During his tenure Jennings increased the amount of revenue from the sale of swamp and overflow lands by 100 percent, but he also vetoed numerous unnecessary appropriation bills. By 1905 the treasury balance had been increased from $32,805 to almost $500,000, and the bonded debt had been reduced forty

percent. More importantly the general tax rate was reduced from three mills to just one-half mill. All this occurred while funding for education, state institutions, internal improvements, and pensions was increased. It was a truly remarkable fiscal record and was enthusiastically endorsed by Florida's citizens.

By far the greatest accomplishment and legacy of the Jennings administration was its land policy. For over twenty-five years public lands, originally designated for drainage and reclamation purposes, had been routinely granted to railroads and corporations as a subsidy. Of the 564 railroads receiving charters less than one-half ever built roads. By 1901 this misguided giveaway policy had resulted in the depletion of the public domain and in the curious situation of railroads and corporations holding grants to more land than the state owned. Jennings and other progressives argued that the lands belonged to the people, and they were outraged by the scandalous practice. The state's most prized resource had been squandered. The governor felt strongly that such a policy could be legally reversed for it was subverting the intent of the Internal Improvement Act of 1855, which had reserved the lands for the people and for reclamation and drainage.[21]

For two years Jennings and his staff investigated, researched, studied, and prepared legal briefs on the status of the public lands. The work was painstaking and tedious;

few reports and records were extant. But Jennings persevered for he saw the administration of the state's lands as "one of the greatest trusts" he had been vested with.[22] He ordered a thorough search of all state offices and archives and directed that minutes, records, and laws pertinent to the subject be published and put into the public record. In the course of these investigations he found that a vast tract of the Everglades had never been patented. With the help of Florida's congressional delegation and by personally pursuing the matter in Washington, the state received a patent to 2,862,080 acres of South Florida land. The railroads, citing earlier state grants to them, immediately laid claim to this acreage but the governor had other plans for it.

In his 1903 message to the legislature Jennings unveiled an elaborate drainage and reclamation plan for the Everglades. The idea was not original but he was the first political leader to try to do something about the matter. The newly patented lands were surveyed and engineering studies were begun. To validate the feasibility of such an ambitious undertaking Jennings produced tables, charts, graphs, expert opinions, and what he later called "the famous map." About this document, he wrote "it served a great purpose (for) it brought to the attention of the public the whole situation of the lands and incited keen interest."[23] Napoleon Broward, Sherman's successor, was to

make the map even more well known during his own gubernatorial campaign of 1904.

The legislature approved Jennings' plan, but the actual work of drainage and reclamation was not to begin until the year after he left office. Few projects before or since have captured the imagination of Floridians as did the Everglades drainage and reclamation program. During the Jennings administration not one acre of public lands was deeded to any corporation. As a consequence of this, and because of opposition to drainage, the railroads and corporations instituted numerous suits against the state. For years these legal battles threatened to slow down and even halt the reclamation work. Jennings acted as counsel for the state in many of these suits. Eventually Florida's ownership of the lands and its right to drain, reclaim, and tax them was upheld in the courts.

The high stakes involved in the reclamation of the Everglades made it a highly controversial project. Most people viewed it as a wise undertaking which would conserve and make productive a hitherto useless area. To those now in the ecologically-minded 1980s the plan appears naive and misguided, but in 1903 it was thought that only man's ingenuity prevented a useless swamp from becoming a "garden of eden." With only a few canals here, and a dike or two there, the Everglades could be made lush and green. The longterm detrimental consequences of the project on the land,

the animals, or the Indians were never fully contemplated. Few questioned the wisdom of the project. Floridians still live with both the positive and negative results of the great dream of William Sherman Jennings and Napoleon Bonaparte Broward.

May stood firmly behind her husband and shared his plans for the Everglades. She too visualized a land of "milk and honey" springing out of the swampy vastness of South Florida. For years she had heard from her father of the fortunes and benefits that would accrue from the drainage of the swamplands. As early as 1885 Austin Mann had toured South Florida in search of a route for a cross-state canal. May had heard him describe the paradise that lay below Kissimmee, but it would be years before she would see it for herself. Reclamation and conservation of the Everglades was an issue that was to burn deep in her heart and mind, until she became personally involved in the project. Her natural affinity for nature and for tropical Florida turned that involvement into a lifetime commitment.

Despite its many accomplishments the Jennings administration was not without its mistakes or its harrowing incidents. Strangely, most occurred during the first few months that Sherman and May were in Tallahassee. One of his first acts as governor was to investigate and renegotiate the state's convict-lease contracts. The convict-lease system was a deplorable institution which many progressives sought

to abolish. But after thorough study Jennings became convinced that it was the most practical solution available, for it meant that the state would not have to support a large and costly penal system. After a study of the problems of convict-lease Jennings became convinced that the system's cruel abuses could be eliminated. Although his supervisor of convicts wrote that the prisoners were in the main "healthy and cheerful," others contradicted this assertion.[24] Jennings also felt that any profits from the system belonged to the state.

Under his leadership, the cabinet, through a series of ploys and deft political maneuvers, renegotiated a more lucrative contract. It brought to the treasury $148,000 per year for 975 convicts, or a more than sevenfold increase over the previous amount received. The new contract was hailed as a great victory and the governor as one who had "outfoxed" the state's omnipotent phosphate companies. Not everyone viewed it as a victory, however, for progressives were disappointed that an entirely new penal system had not been established. The whole episode is examined by Gordon Carper in his study of the Florida convict-lease system. In a chapter entitled "Crime for Profit" he cautiously commends Governor Jennings' actions, but states that "unfortunately he achieved economy at the expense of the convicts." He also notes that the inhumane practices of the system

continued, despite the good intentions of the Jennings administration.[25]

Probably the most controversial event of Jennings' term was the passage of the "Flagler Divorce Bill." Henry Flagler's second wife was confined to a New York insane asylum. Flagler tolerated the situation for some years until 1900. Determined to marry Mary Kenan, a young and vivacious North Carolina belle with whom he had fallen in love, he decided to do something about the matter. First he transferred his legal residence from New York to Florida. Then he got supporters in the 1901 legislature to introduce a bill making incurable insanity grounds for divorce. The bill caused an immediate sensation across the state.

Politicians, clergymen, and newspapers took up sides. Charges and countercharges were exchanged. There were rumors that Flagler had paid off the legislature. Even Jennings was said to be in Flagler's pocket. The state's Baptists were enraged and issued a call-to-arms. The governor, a trustee of Stetson University and Florida's most prominent Baptist, was bitterly criticized by pulpit and press for supporting and signing the bill. It was charged that Flagler had used his great wealth in the 1900 state convention to secure the nomination for Jennings in return for Sherman's support of the bill. It was a serious charge. That Jennings knew Flagler was well known, but there is no evidence to substantiate these contentions.[26]

The question remains, however, as to why the governor, a staunch Baptist churchman, supported such an unpopular and morally controversial law. Flagler got his divorce, the bill was later repealed, and the governor suffered the consequences for his actions. The affair made enemies for him; his Baptist brethren remembered his involvement the next time he ran for public office.

On May 3, 1901, the greatest conflagration ever to strike a Florida city occurred when a large section of Jacksonville, the state's largest city, burned to the ground. When news of the calamity reached Tallahassee the governor and his staff quickly responded. Martial law was declared, and by afternoon of that same day a special train with state troops, newsmen, officials, and Jacksonville's legislative delegation aboard was dispatched to the still burning city. More than 100 blocks of the city's business and residential area was gutted. Some 2,368 buildings had been destroyed, and thousands of citizens were homeless.[27] May Jennings remembered the tragedy with "sadness and recalled the soup kitchens and emergency establishments" that were hastily erected.[28]

The governor visited Jacksonville to inspect the damage and review the troops. His quick response to the emergency was noted but some criticized the small amount of financial aid he had sent to the city. Damage had

exceeded $15,000,000; state aid totaled only $20,000. Hundreds of thousands of dollars were donated to the city by people throughout the United States.

On December 17, 1903, the governor, while working quietly in his office, narrowly escaped a potential assassin's attack. An escaped inmate from a Georgia asylum had somehow traveled to Tallahassee, and entered the Capitol building undetected. Suddenly he appeared in the governor's suite screaming that he needed protection from pursuing persecutors. Growing wild with rage he made a dash for the governor, but secretary Dickinson was able to close the door to the inner office, and he wrestled the distraught man to the floor while others summoned help. Jennings was shaken but unharmed.[29]

The Jennings spent four busy years in Tallahassee. When the legislature was not in session activities in the capital city slowed down considerably. Dickinson once wrote at one of those times that, "everything is as dull as can be here."[30] Gubernatorial duties in those years were cyclical and limited, Jennings concentrated on non-critical state business and on his own law practice during the months that the legislature was not in session. May, whose energy seemed limitless, remained active and involved however sluggish life in Tallahassee became. There was much to demand her attention, particularly Bryan, who was attending Miss Ame's private academy. May chaired a committee

to raise money for a new sanctuary for the Baptist church. There was also her own personal and official correspondence, and activities connected with her duties as First Lady. There was upkeep of the rented mansion, supervision of the Brooksville homestead, as well as daily shopping, sewing, gardening, and cooking. There was also her own wardrobe which required attention. She always wore stylish clothes. She had a favorite dressmaker who resided in St. Augustine and served the affluent winter tourists. A milliner by trade, this lady kept May posted about the latest styles. She was also a friend and offered what she called "pearls of wisdom." Once she wrote the first lady: "hats are like husbands, they need to be selected with great care."[31] May loved the woman dearly and often lent her money to help her through slack periods in dressmaking.

May had to oversee the governor's official entertaining which was considerable during the Jennings years. She was responsible for several tours de force in entertaining which garnered statewide comment. The first was an elaborate dinner party which the Jennings gave in 1901 in honor of the cabinet, and which established her reputation in Tallahassee as a gracious and creative hostess. The Daily Capitol reported that the dinner, given at the Leon and attended by seventeen people, was the "first time in the history of the capital that the cabinet had been so feted." The paper called it "one of the most enjoyable social

functions ever given in Tallahassee, a notable feature (was) the absence of formality, and the atmosphere of cordiality and geniality which the accomplished hostess so successfully imparted to the occasion."[32]

Even the food served at the dinner was noteworthy; it too made the front page of the newspaper. The elaborate menu included, "Apalachicola oysters, creme of fowl, consommé pretiníere, celery and olives, broiled lake trout in drawn butter sauce, saddle of venison with mushrooms, french peas, asparagus tips, roast turkey with stuffing and cranberry sauce, creamed potatoes, chicken salad, vanilla ice cream, assorted cakes, fruit, cheese, crackers, mixed nuts, and coffee."[33] The dinner proved a gastronomic delight; people talked about it for weeks.

On their twelfth wedding anniversary in 1903, the Jennings gave a reception in honor of the legislature, that was then in session. The following day's newspaper headlines noted, "Governor's Reception a Brilliant Function-Elite of Tallahassee in Attendance."[34] Over 500 people attended, and several times during the evening there was "a jam of carriages" in front of the Jennings' residence. The mansion was beautifully decorated: "The veranda was ablaze with electric lights in the national colors of red, white and blue and was screened in with national flags . . . palms and yellow flowers occupied places in every nook and corner of the house and vines entwined around windows,

arches and doorways."[35] Each room of the house was decorated in a different color. The governor's study, which served as the ice cream parlor, was festooned in pink! A local orchestra provided music, and each guest was presented with a favor, a miniature American flag, upon his departure. The news reporter commented upon the handsome gowns worn by May and Grace and stated that "there was absolutely no formality about the function, and all guests spent a most delightful time."[36]

Not all of the Jennings' entertainments were elaborate. The family also enjoyed picnics and playing ping-pong, and card games such as crazy eights and hearts. They often read aloud to one another, and joined in parlor "sing alongs." May enjoyed music and was proud of her singing ability. Music played an important role in the Jennings household.

Once a week May and Bryan went buggy riding. They often rode with Sarah Lamar, wife of the attorney general, or with Colonel C.W. Walker, a family friend. When riding alone they toured the city and countryside in a "victoria and span" drawn by white horses. May is remembered on these rides as always being modishly dressed and sporting a parasol.

The records do not show that May participated in formal clubwork while living in Tallahassee, although she may have helped organize the local woman's club, for the

Tallahassee Improvement Association was established shortly after the Jennings arrived in the city in 1901. Organized by local women, it wanted to beautify the community by cleaning up the parks, sidewalks, and streets. By 1903, its successor, the Tallahassee Woman's Club, had become involved in more important civic matters. It wanted the state to build or purchase a home for the governor and his family, and it became an outspoken opponent of the local educational establishment. It endorsed the creation of a graded high school with a modern and comprehensive curricula, to replace Leon Academy, which had served the town for over a generation. The local paper wryly noted that, "there is a woman's club in Tallahassee, and judging by the way in which they haul the local school board over the coals the club doesn't exist merely for the purpose of discussing social events and fashions."[37] It later added that "the ladies are aroused (but) the school board ignores them."[38] Their persistence, however, eventually won out and Tallahassee's school system was reformed.

Apparently May considered it impolitic to belong to such an outspoken organization, and she took no public stand on issues. Judged by her later battles, however, she probably supported the ladies' goals. She did oversee a special beautification project of her own. The renovation and improvement of the Capitol was completed late in 1902. From January until April the following year she supervised

the landscaping of the building's grounds. Rye grass was sown, paths marked out, and flowering shrubs and trees planted in time for the legislative session. Some of the local women aided in the work.[39] She also helped decorate the Capitol for the dedication in December. At that function a banquet was served in the House chamber, while a ball was held in the Senate chamber. May also decorated the governor's new offices. The suite included a reception room, secretary's office, and the governor's office. There were new tables, settees, chairs, bookcases, desks, file cabinets, umbrella racks, wardrobes, and nine brass cuspidors. The furniture was mahogany and massive. The governor's rolltop desk was sixteen feet long.

The Jennings traveled extensively but tried to spend their holidays in Brooksville. In February 1901 they made an official trip to Pensacola to participate in Mardi Gras festivities which coincided with a visit by the United States Navy's North Atlantic Squadron. There were dinners, a parade, and a ball held in honor of the visitors. While the governor conferred with Admiral N.H. Farquahar and Secretary of the Navy John D. Long about Florida's naval defenses, May was feted at the home of Mrs. William D. Chipley. This pattern was to be repeated many times. Whether traveling alone or with her husband, May usually received special attention from the local ladies. Thus she was able, in four years, to meet most of the prominent

women in Florida and to build-up a network of statewide friendships which would prove helpful to her future work.

The Jennings received many invitations to attend state, regional, and national meetings. While most of them had to be refused, they did manage to attend a large number of functions. Except in rare cases, May almost always traveled with her husband. The events the Jennings attended revealed their wide range of interests: the launching of the U.S.S. Florida at Elizabeth, New Jersey, in 1901; the 1901 Tammany Society's July 4th lecture series in New York City; Florida Bar Association conventions; Florida Press Association conventions; Florida State Horticultural Society meetings; the annual Florida Baptist convention; the 1902 California State Fair in San Francisco; the Southern Turpentine Association convention; Florida Education Association convention; Florida State Fair (May served on the Fair's woman's board); St. Louis World's Fair; and the National Good Roads Association convention in New York. In 1904 Jennings and his father-in-law attended the second official automobile races on the beach at Daytona. The Governor spoke at the Good Roads Convention which was held in conjunction with the races. Austin, who had attended the first race in 1903, was an officer in both the Good Roads organization and the Florida East Coast Automobile Association, which sponsored the races. Returning from the event

the two stopped in St. Augustine and had their picture taken together.[39]

In addition to these travels the Jennings attended scores of Democratic party functions, political rallies, high school and college commencement exercises, and various minor civic events. The state legislature was still meeting only once every two years and the governor's duties were such that in 1901 he could travel, conduct private business, lead an active social life, and still have time to carry on his responsibilities as chief executive. May enjoyed traveling, and later in her statewide clubwork she would travel thousands of miles in the performance of official duties. Extensive traveling was a natural part of her life style; "living out of a suitcase" never seemed to bother her.

Two trips the Jennings took were especially important and interesting. In September 1901 they traveled by train with a number of Floridians to the Pan-American Exhibition in Buffalo, New York. The fair which had received world wide publicity featured exhibits from all the states and countries in the Western hemisphere. It was located on a 350-acre site outside the city.[40] The Jennings had come to participate in "Florida day" activities and to officially open the Florida exhibit, which was housed in a booth built to resemble a palmetto hut having beams and girders draped with Spanish moss.[41]

The gaiety of the event was dampened, for in a house near the fairgrounds, President McKinley lay dying, the victim of an assassin's bullet. The President had been shot while touring the fair only a few days prior to the Jennings arrival. McKinley's deteriorating condition had thrown the country into a state of melancholy and had cast a pall over the Exhibition. Despite the somberness of the occasion, the Jennings paid their respects at the president's residence, and then were accorded the honor of being shown the fairgrounds in a "horseless carriage," a privilege reserved for only the most distinguished guests.[42]

In the spring of 1902 the Jennings were among the official party at ceremonies in Havana at which Cuban independence was formally recognized. Since the end of the Spanish-American War the island had been under the jurisdiction of the United States. In 1902 that relationship ended, and Cuba was declared a free republic. The geographic proximity of Florida and Cuba and the fact that there had been close ties for centuries was a major reason why Florida's chief executive was chosen to represent the United States at the ceremonies. In addition to Sherman, May, their son Bryan, Grace, and a number of Washington dignitaries, the official party also included William Jennings Bryan, who traveled as a correspondent for the news magazine, Colliers' Weekly. The visitors were feted to a tour of the city, an elaborate banquet, a fancy dress ball, a jai alai

game, a fireworks display, and a yacht club breakfast. On May 20, 1902, at an impressive ceremony at Moro Castle, with guns saluting, soldiers standing at attention, and a band playing anthems, the forty-five star American flag was lowered and the new flag of Cuba was raised.[43] The American flag was presented to May. She cherished it for many years.[44]

The Jennings once received an invitation from Professor E. Warren Clark, who lived outside of Tallahassee on the old Croom plantation, Casa de Laga. The property occupied a thousand acres on a bend along the shoreline of Lake Jackson. Clark had turned it into a successful dairy farm and had renamed the place Shidzuoka. Clark was respected but was considered a bit eccentric. He was described as a man who "farmed with imagination and whose personality added color to life along the west shore of Lake Jackson."[45] A neighbor remembered that "the bespectacled Professor frequently peddled his bike along old Bainbridge Road and that he occasionally held elaborate celebrations at Shidzouka."[46] Two of these celebrations involved the Jennings. The first was an elegant garden party on the plantation's spacious lawn beneath a grove of stately oak trees, held in honor of Sherman's inauguration. The Jennings and cabinet officials attended.

Professor Clark was a kind-hearted man and was dedicated to the advancement of blacks. Periodically he held a day-long entertainment for Leon County's ex-slaves, to

celebrate May 20th, Florida's Emancipation day.[47] Clark, who came from a New England background, did not endear himself to Leon County whites by holding these celebrations, but they tolerated them. The professor meant well and felt that he was helping the blacks. They, in turn, enjoyed his parties and looked forward to them with anticipation. Professor Clark expressed the accepted liberal attitude of the day. He viewed the former slaves as children who needed whites to protect them, educate them, and save their souls. Later his brand of liberalism would seem patently condescending, patronizing, and offensive, but in 1901 it represented the most enlightened attitude that white liberals could bring to the racial question.

In 1901 he invited Governor and Mrs. Jennings to his next celebration. He wrote, "Next Monday is Emancipation Day. Sixteen years or more ago I gave a grand entertainment here at Lake Jackson for the Colored People, nearly a thousand of them came, and I invited Governor Perry out here to spend the night and address the Colored People, which he did. Could you drive out? After a five minute address to your 'colored constituents' we could show you immense stereocopticon views. This time our subject is 'Types of Colored Races of the World.' The illustrations will include the native Hawaiians, Filipinos, Chinese, Japanese, Singalese, Hindoos, Brahmins, Mohammedans, ancient Egyptians, and Ethiopians . . . a dense Black Crowd would listen to you and

such a little visit would do a great deal of good."[49] The professor, who apparently thought all non-whites were Negroes, concluded his invitation with the information that he was at that very minute writing a new book entitled "Uncle Tom's Cabin Up to Date"![49]

Professor Clark held his May 20th celebration as planned. Over 1,000 blacks attended, many traveling long distances to get to the plantation. Almost all were dressed in their best Sunday attire. There was food, hymn singing, lectures, "music by phonograph" and the much anticipated stereocopticon show of "types of colored races." Part of the day's entertainment was described by the local newspaper. It seems that "Dr. Wa-hoo-chee, an Indian lecturer and exhibiter, assisted Professor Clark. . . . Wa-hoo-chee whose Indian ancestors once roamed over (Florida's) 'happy hunting grounds' was photographed with his squaw and his dog in full Indian war costume, with tomahawk in one hand and open Bible in the other. . . . When the Indian presented his passion play to the colored people the scene of Lazarus arising from the dead and Christ himself unshrouding his risen body affected the emotional nature of the colored people so that some of them cried out as if Christ were actually before them."[50] It is not known if the Jennings accepted Clark's invitation and attended the celebration.

In 1903 Sherman began to give serious thought to his political future. For over a year he had assessed the

feasibility of running for a higher office. In 1902 there had been rumors that he would become a "dark horse" candidate for vice-president on the national Democratic ticket. There was also speculation that he would run for Congress. The voters waited for an announcement. Finally in August 1903, he declared his intentions; he would enter the 1904 primary and seek a seat in the United States Senate. To his supporters his gubernatorial record made him an unbeatable candidate. More astute observers, however, were not so optimistic. He had waited too long to announce his candidacy, and he would be running against a popular and powerful incumbent.

Senator James P. Taliaferro would be a formidable opponent. He was a conservative Democrat who came from a wealthy Jacksonville family. In addition John N.C. Stockton, also from Duval County, and a protege of Napoleon Broward, was a candidate. By waiting so long to declare his intentions Jennings' campaign lost momentum before it ever really got started. From the beginning of the race he was the "underdog."

Although his record as governor was impressive and he was well-liked by most Floridians, he had angered many in the party by some of his decisions as governor. Also, his manner was quiet and reserved. Many felt that he lacked the charisma and personality required to win a wide-open primary race. To the voters he did not appear to have the

strong temperament or the toughness that Floridians thought their senator should have. In addition he was faced with the added burden of having to justify his candidacy to his follow Democrats. Why, they asked, did he dilute the liberal challenge to Taliaferro by making the primary a three-way race? Wasn't Stockton as much a liberal as he? Indeed, one historian has stated that even "the voters were inclined to regard Stockton as a more sincere liberal than Jennings."[51]

The three candidates attended the state Democratic convention at Punta Gorda, where a large rally was held to kick off the campaign. Each was called upon to speak. Jennings supporters must have realized their candidate was in trouble when it was reported that, "The Governor has not yet forsaken free silver, and his bold declaration of continued affiliation with a dead issue was not unnoticed by his hearers (who) regard (him) as a third party."[52] From that time onward the Jennings campaign seemed to go from bad to worse. The primary proved to be bitter and vitriolic. Charges, counter-charges, and mud-slinging became the rule rather than the exception. At times Jennings seemed overwhelmed by the bitter attacks, but he made a gallant effort to bypass personalities and campaign on the issues.

May worked hard to reverse the trend. Again she was in charge of the campaign paperwork. She supervised a statewide mailing and publicity operation, and she

organized the Governor's speaking tour. Her formal title was "Chairman of the Jennings' Campaign Committee on Publicity and Promotion."[53] She was also president of the Tallahassee Jennings club. Despite her efforts and a valiant speaking tour in which Sherman tried to present himself as a forceful, dynamic leader, he and May knew that they were fighting an "uphill battle." The primary election returns showed just how difficult the battle had been. Sherman trailed far behind both of the other candidates and was eliminated from the race. May was disappointed by her husband's defeat but remained smiling and spirited in her public appearances. Sherman was more philosophical about his defeat, and seemed almost relieved that the ordeal was behind him. He threw his support to Broward, who was running for governor, and then set about making plans for the future.

The Jennings faced several options. They could return to Brooksville where Sherman would resume his law practice. He could try for another public office, or he could accept one of the offers of employment that were being tendered to him. In November 1904 the Governor made his decision. He had received a lucrative offer which he felt he could not refuse. A new financial institution, purported to be the state's largest, was being formed and he had been offered a vice-presidency of it and a handsome retainer to act as the firm's legal counsel. Sherman and

May would move to Jacksonville. For May the move was to prove fortunate for it would place her in the state's largest city, in the best location for her to pursue her avocations of club and civic work. May would make her mark in Jacksonville.

Notes to Chapter IV

[1]Unidentified newspaper clipping, October 18, 1901. WSJ Papers, Box 9.

[2]Proctor, Broward, p. 174.

[3]The Weekly Tallahassean, January 10, 1901.

[4]Ibid., January 17, 1901.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Lake City Citizen-Reporter, January 11, 1901.

[7]The handwritten original copy of the address is in the possession of Dorothy Jennings Sandridge.

[8]The Weekly Tallahassean, January 10, 1901.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Norton Kealthly to William S. Jennings, February 4, 1901. WSJ Papers, Box 8.

[11]Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, July 10, 1955.

[12]The Weekly Tallahassean, January 10, 1901.

[13]Ibid., October 25, 1901.

[14]Ibid., August 1, 1902.

[15]Interview with Dorothy Brown Jennings, July 27, 1978. Penney Farms, Florida.

[16]Blackman, The Women of Florida, II, p. 92.

[17]Eustis Lake Region, September 5, 1901.

[18]Florida Legislative Directory 1903 (Tallahassee, 1903), p. 43.

[19]Elizabeth Bell Hightower to author, July 2, 1978.

[20]For an assessment of William S. Jennings' gubernatorial abilities see Colburn and Scher, "Florida Gubernatorial Politics," unpublished MS. In possession of authors, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida.

[21]For an overview of the public land policies see J.E. Dovell, "The Railroads and the Public Lands of Florida, 1879-1905," Florida Historical Quarterly, XXXIV, January 1956, pp. 236-258.

[22]William S. Jennings, "Florida's Public Lands," Legislative Bluebook, 1917, p. 50.

[23]Ibid., p. 54.

[24]R.F. Rogers to William S. Jennings, April 1901. WSJ Papers, Box 8.

[25]Gordon N. Carper, "The Convict-Lease System in Florida, 1866-1923" (Ph.D. dissertation, Florida State University, 1964), p. 186.

[26]Photographs of Jennings and Flagler together are in possession of Dorothy Jennings Sandridge.

[27]Benjamin Harrison, Acres of Ashes (Jacksonville, 1901), passim.

[28]Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, July 10, 1955.

[29]New York American, December 18, 1902.

[30]C.H. Dickinson to William S. Jennings, June 11, 1901. WSJ Papers, Box 9.

[31]Mary Wakefield to May Jennings, September, 1901. MMJ Papers, Box 1.

[32]The Daily Capital, December 5, 1901.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Ibid., May 13, 1903.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Ibid.

[37]The Weekly Tallahassean, July 17, 1903.

[38]Ibid., August 7, 1903.

[39]Alice Strickland, "Florida's Golden Age of Racing," Florida Historical Quarterly, XXXXV, January, 1967, p. 259.

[40]Florida School Exponent, v. VIII, No. 4, December 1900, p. 6.

[41]Daytona Gazette-News, June 22, 1901.

[42]Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, September 13, 1901.

[43]El Figaro, XVIII, June, 1902.

[44]The Moro Castle flag is in the possession of Dorothy Jennings Sandridge.

[45]Clifton Paisley, From Cotton to Quail: An Agricultural Chronicle of Leon County, Florida, 1860-1967 (Gainesville, 1968), p. 75.

[46]Ibid., p. 76.

[47]For a description of May 20th Emancipation Day celebrations see Susan Bradford Eppes, The Negro of the Old South (Chicago, 1925), p. 115.

[48]E. Warren Clark to William S. Jennings, May, 1901. WSJ Papers, Box 9.

[49]Ibid.

[50]The Weekly Tallahassean, May 23, 1901.

[51]Proctor, Broward, p. 189.

[52]Unidentified newspaper clipping, August 25, 1903. Jennings Scrapbook No. 2, WSJ Papers.

[53]Letterhead on Campaign stationery, November, 1903. WSJ Papers, Box 16.

CHAPTER V
JACKSONVILLE, THE FEDERATION, AND OTHER THINGS

The move to Jacksonville proved the right decision for the Jennings family. In 1905 the city's population was nearly 40,000. As the state's industrial and financial capital it had an active civic and social life and a good school system. Bryan Jennings would graduate from Duval High School and attend Stetson University where he would acquire a law degree. Grace Mann continued to live with the Jennings. She attended Wesleyan College in Macon, Georgia, and in 1910 married John M. Bell, a Jacksonville businessman.

The first years in Jacksonville Governor Jennings solidified the family's finances. He became a vice-president of the Florida Bank and Trust. He bought stock in the Barnes-Jessup Naval Stores Company, and he acquired extensive real estate holdings.[1] He developed a law practice which became so large that eventually he took on Bryan, his son, and Benjamin F. Brass, as junior partners. The Jennings firm was located in the Dyal-Upchurch building on Bay Street.

The first two years in the city the Jennings lived in rented homes, including the Meunart House at 129 East 7th Street. In 1907 the family moved into their own house

which they built on the corner of Main and Seventh streets in Springfield, which lay north of Hogan's Creek and which contained some of the city's most elegant residences. When the Jennings home was built the area was out in the country beyond the city limits. The trolley, which ran down tracks in the center of a landscaped esplanade on Main street, made a U-turn near the Jennings home, which at the time was the end of the line.

The Jennings house was one of the largest in north Jacksonville. Two-story and frame, it cost $6,000 to build--an impressive sum in 1907.[2] It had twelve rooms including eight upstairs bedrooms. On the first floor there were a large entrance hall, parlor, dining room, and a kitchen. The house had "broad airy porches on both the first and second floors, front and rear."[3] There was a large stable at the rear of the property which was later converted into a garage. Inside, the house had grain edge pine flooring, curley pine doors, chandeliers, leaded glass windows, and a mahogany staircase. The furniture--oak, ebony, and mahogany--was large, in the style of the time. There was a piano in the parlor and the governor's desk, a magnificent roll-top affair of burl and mahogany, was prominently displayed. The desk, which had been a parting gift from his cabinet, carried a brass placque with their names and the dates of the Jennings administration.[4] Linens used in the house were all hand embroidered by May and carried the family monogram.

Austin Mann wrote his daughter when she moved into her new home that, "God has sure been good to you."[5] Providence soon blessed Mann also for he too built a new home. This house, even larger than his daughter's, was an elegant structure which he named "Olivewood." It was located on the northwest corner of Silver and Eleventh streets only a few blocks from the Jennings home.[6]

Soon after moving into her new home May planted trees, flowers, and gardens. The grounds, while not spacious, were tastefully landscaped. Gardening was one of May Jennings' favorite activities. Her appreciation of the outdoors and the beauties of nature continued throughout her life. She was especially fond of flowers such as roses, hollyhocks, snapdragons, larkspurs, and sweetpeas. Her garden also contained a bed of prize-winning lilies, which elicited much comment from those who visited the house. Over the years May was to become a skilled amateur horticulturist and spent time ordering seeds and plants and writing friends and experts to exchange information about gardening and farming. When the house was demolished decades later several of the palm trees which she had planted in 1907, and which had grown very tall, were transplanted to the grounds of Jacksonville's city hall.[7] In its early years the Jennings house also had a small chicken yard on the premises. At one time May ordered an incubator to facilitate the raising of fowl. It was a novel device, and friends and

neighbors made special visits to view it in operation. Occasionally she raised pigeons and doves for their eggs, which she considered a delicacy. A cow was kept for its milk.

Sometimes May's attachment and loyalty to her beloved state of Florida manifested itself in curious and humorous ways. Shortly before the family moved into their new home she chose as the house's box number 1845. The number was a sentimental choice because it was the date of Florida's entry into the Union as a state. The number worked fine as long as the Jennings home was out in the country, but the Springfield area grew rapidly, and eventually the house number caused a monumental headache for the United States Postal Service. A conflict was inevitable for May was determined to keep her house number. After threats, cajolings, and finally negotiations the dilemma was solved. Despite the consternation of the postal service and the inconvenience the illogical number caused her neighbors, May retained the address of 1845 Main Street, and so it remained until her death.[8]

Because of the size of the house and because of the family's social position the Jennings always had servants. There was a laundress who had worked for them in Tallahassee and who had moved to Jacksonville with the family. The kitchen maid was a black, named Lizzie Logan, who worked for the Jennings many years. There was also a black houseman,

Benny, who served as handyman, gardener, and chauffeur. He too was employed by the family for many years. May was kind to her servants, but she always "expected from them a full day's work for a full day's wages."[9]

After settling in Jacksonville the Jennings quickly immersed themselves in the city's civic life. Because they preferred activities which concerned philanthropic, civic, or political matters, rather than mere social fraternization, they never belonged to exclusive social organizations like the country club or the Seminole and Yacht clubs. Neither did they indulge in that faddish social activity, whist playing (the card game bridge), which was then all the rage in Jacksonville. Their circle of friends included prominent local, state and national business and political leaders. As in Tallahassee, May gained a reputation as a hostess with exceptional abilities. The local paper predicted before one of her parties that "All the guests will be talented, and an artists' evening will be enjoyed. That the evening will be a success, and every moment will be full of pleasure, goes without saying since Mrs. Jennings is the hostess."[10] In addition to hospitality with her husband she frequently entertained her own friends, and for many years she played host to eminent clubwomen from Florida and the nation who happened to pass through the city. It was not uncommon for the Jennings to have a dozen or more overnight houseguests in the span of one month's time.

Governor Jennings never again held elective office, but he stayed active in politics and continued to speak out on major issues. In 1908 he and Austin Mann, who at that time held high office in the state and national Good Roads association, were delegates to the national Democratic convention in Denver. That same year Jennings served as his cousin's southern campaign manager in William Jennings Bryan's third try for the presidency. In 1911 Jennings served on a special commission which studied Florida's outmoded tax system. He supported the Democratic candidates--Albert W. Gilchrist and Park Trammell--in the 1908 and 1912 gubernatorial races, and in 1916 he backed William V. Knott in his contest against Sidney J. Catts.

Jennings' prime interest until his death was the great Everglades drainage project. In 1905 Governor Broward appointed him counsel to the trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund, a position he held almost five years. If Broward was the driving force and the "mouthpiece" of the vast reclamation project, then Jennings was its architect and legal "brains." It was because of his abilities that the legal ambiguities and threats to the project were untangled. Almost singlehandedly he was to see that all of the challenges against it were met and successfully resolved in the courts.[11] He authored important enabling legislation, and he drafted the bills which financed the undertaking. The work was time-consuming and arduous, although he received

Broward's gratitude and a $5,000 yearly salary from the state for his services. Work on the Everglades project embroiled Jennings in several controversies. In 1906 he sued the Jasper News for slander because of libelous editorials it published concerning his efforts on behalf of drainage. He won the case.[12] In 1907 he was involved in an altercation with Congressman Frank Clark, in which he struck the politician over the head with a hickory cane. The flap was caused by remarks Clark made about Jennings and the so-called profits Jennings had received from his work for the state. Working on behalf of the misunderstood reclamation program was not easy and Jennings and Broward were frequent targets of ambitious politicians and newspapers which printed sensational but often incorrect news stories.

In 1909 Jennings resigned his post as counsel to the Trustees, but he shortly became attorney for the State Board of Drainage Commissioners. Again he defended the state's actions in the courts. Through the years the faith of Sherman and May in the reclamation project never diminished. Jennings became a nationally recognized authority on the dual subjects of canals and drainage and gave numerous speeches around the country. May, also, "talked up" the drainage project whenever she could. Several times the Jennings journeyed to the work sites to observe the progress of the dredges as the mammoth machines plowed their way

across the glades. During one such trip the family boated up the Caloosahatchee River to inspect the dredges and to indulge in some "unexcelled duck shooting and fishing."[13] In 1911 the Jennings traveled to Europe--Holland and other countries--on behalf of the National Drainage Association and to observe firsthand the great European canal projects. They returned to the United States aboard the British liner Lusitania, later destined for a tragic demise.

In 1912 Jennings organized and hosted on behalf of the state a trip from Fort Myers to Fort Lauderdale via the newly-cut drainage canals. The journey, which treated northern newsmen and prominent Floridians to a free excursion, marked the official opening of a cross-state waterway. The trip, undertaken to blunt criticism of the costly Everglades project, was a success, for the participants returned to their homes and issued glowing reports about what they had seen in south Florida. Apparently, however, they did more than just observe the canals and scenery for in Jennings' expense log book of the expedition one finds outlays for items such as playing cards, poker chips, tumblers, cigars, strawhats, and bathing suits.[14] Austin Mann, who had been promoting a cross-Florida canal for decades and who was now seventy-four, was one of the guests and it was one of the highlights of his life.

The Jennings were entranced with south Florida and they began spending more and more of their time in the area.

In 1912 they purchased two waterfront lots in Miami, and in 1916 built a large vacation home which they named "House-in-the-Woods." It was located at 3633 Brickell Avenue, between the James Deering estate "Vizcaya" and the William Jennings Bryan home "Villa Serena."[15] "House-in-the-Woods" was the scene of several important meetings and parties which the Jennings held to promote Everglades drainage, conservation, political candidates, and women's rights.

In 1910 Jennings became attorney for Richard J. Bolles, one of the largest landowners in the Everglades. Jennings, Mann, and Broward had met Bolles at the Democratic Convention in Colorado in 1908. A land speculator, Bolles eventually purchased more than one-half million acres of Florida's swamp and reclaimed lands. He was a controversial figure and some accused him of using questionable land promotion tactics. Eventually he was investigated by the United States Senate. Despite his reputation, his purchase of swamp land aided the state by bailing the drainage project out of its economic doldrums.[16] Prior to Bolles the state was under continual attack by critics who accused Broward and his associates of "draining the treasury" as well as the Everglades.[17] To Jennings and other officials Bolles saved the beleaguered project during the time of its most serious crisis. Because of friendship and legal services performed for Bolles the Jennings became large landowners. They acquired two large tracts of land from

Bolles; nearly 60,000 acres of timber and farmland in Clay County that had been owned jointly by Bolles and Austin Mann, and thousands more acres in Dade County near Homestead. The Jennings family formed several companies. One, known as the Dade Muck Land Company, operated a truck farm and citrus grove on 300 acres, but it proved only marginally successful. Eventually most of this land was sold or lost to the banks during the economic depression of the 1930s. On the Clay county land the Jennings built themselves a large farmhouse, later named "San Lebrydo," and organized the Artesian Farm Company of Middleburg, which farmed vegetables and sold acreage to out-of-state buyers.[18]

The Jennings continued to maintain their original homestead in Brooksville even though they seldom visited it. Thus by 1915 they owned homes in Brooksville, Jacksonville, Miami, and Middleburg. Because of the ex-governor's busy law practice it was May's responsibility to oversee these properties and also much of the operation of the lands. These tasks she performed with her usual efficiency and aplomb. Through the years she had acquired a good knowledge of agricultural affairs from her father and husband. The management of the varied properties was a time-consuming chore and she conducted much of the day-to-day operations through the mails. Only the Middleburg property was regularly visited by the family. At one time May supervised work on a tangerine grove, pecan orchard, a

large potato patch, and a strawberry farm, each in a different location. In using the mails to conduct business she followed the lead of Austin Mann for he had relied on this method for years. His hectic traveling schedule had dictated it. Between 1905 and 1914 he was managing a large peach plantation in Tennessee and properties in Brooksville, as well as a land speculation venture near Sanford known as Celery City. All of this was in addition to his Good Roads work. Both May and her father had the ability to handle simultaneously a variety of family, business, and political obligations.

Occasionally the Jennings had relatives live in their houses and oversee the properties. Two such family members were Roy Mann, May's brother, and Tom Jennings, her brother-in-law. Even though Jacksonville was the family's permanent residence May felt comfortable in all of her houses, and they were always furnished and ready for an unannounced visit by the family. She felt a special affinity for her Miami home, which the Jennings comtemplated as a future retirement home. She made friends with many south Florida women and those friendships were later to be invaluable aids in her statewide clubwork.

May Jennings appeared to outside observers as a woman who was "all business," but to those who knew her intimately she was also a loving and compassionate person. While she had little outward sympathy for moral weakness or

indolence, for many years she privately loaned money to relatives and friends who needed help. She financed the college education of her husband's niece, Marie Kells, and supported her brother's family because he was an alcoholic and could not hold a permanent job. She loaned money to her dressmaker and her servants when they needed help. Because of her strong and sunny personality, which acted as a magnet, she drew to her those who needed a friend. Her manuscript collection is full of letters from strangers, as well as friends, requesting help. Over the years she gave money to the Children's Home Society, Daniel Memorial Orphanange, St. Luke's Hospital, the Audubon Society, the Jacksonville Y.W.C.A., and many other organizations. Her own talents as a fundraiser were often sought for she was not hesitant to ask her many friends for a donation to what she considered a worthy cause.

May's club career began soon after the Jennings moved to Jacksonville. In November of 1905 she received a letter: "Dear Madam, At a recent regular meeting of the Executive Board of the Jacksonville Woman's Club you were duly elected a member."[19] She was thirty-three years old, and photographs of her at that time show a slim, elegantly-dressed woman with strikingly attractive features. Her hats, always large and colorful, were already her trademark. Genteel in manner and dress she looked the part of the refined clubwoman. Her looks and gentility, however, disguised

a strong personality and a politically astute mind. Those who knew her realized that the small, cultured, fashionably dressed woman could and did speak with authority and command of the facts. She was particularly persuasive when talking from a dais before an audience. Over the years the "sense of presence" and charisma that May Jennings exuded were regularly noted by observers.

Within a short time of moving to Jacksonville she had joined the Woman's Club, Ladies' Friday Musicale, Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Springfield Improvement Association. She would eventually help organize the Jacksonville Y.W.C.A. and many other local and state organizations. During those early years in Jacksonville she particularly enjoyed her membership in the Musicale, and was a member of its chorus which rehearsed weekly. At one Musicale gathering she sang a solo entitled "Absent" which, according to a newspaper report, was performed in a "manner which called forth repeated applause."[20] In 1907 the Musicale's chorus performed at the Dixieland Theatre as part of a Saengerfest sponsored by the local German society. A few weeks prior to the performance May read before her fellow chorus members a paper she had written about Wagner's Tannhauser.[21] Eventually she resigned from the chorus because of the press of other obligations, but she retained membership in the Musicale and continued to attend its many functions.

From 1905 until 1914 May's ablest efforts were expended on behalf of the Jacksonville Woman's Club (JWC), because it more than any other organization seemed to meet her earnest need to be actively involved in community affairs. Through it she felt she could participate in the progressive political movement then underway in Florida, a movement which her husband's administration had helped launch. Through her clubwork May Jennings was to become one of the first women in Florida to enter the state's political scene. She became one of the first to take advantage of the new social and political changes that were beginning to impact American women, allowing them to play a more involved role. Those changes would thrust May Jennings into the forefront of activity and make her one of the best known personalities in the state.

A major forum that women, like May Jennings, used to gain entry into the new worlds of political and civic responsibility was the woman's club--an organization which provided just the right amount of genteel respectability for public exposure, while at the same time providing the ladies with selfhelp and educational programs. While the woman's club movement appeared to be a peripheral outgrowth of the national progressive movement that began during the 1890s, in reality it could trace its roots back to the Civil War period. There was a direct link, a thread of continuity, running from the antebellum abolition societies to the

women's missionary societies of the 1870s, to the women's temperance unions a decade later, and then to the women's clubs of the 1890s.[22] It was not rare at all to find many clubwomen who had belonged to each of these earlier organizations.

After the Civil War more and more women, North and South, sought employment outside their homes and began to handle their own property. The 1890s were to mark an important turning point in this phenomenon. Changing public attitudes toward women plus technology, which helped to free them from household drudgery, helped to promote a degree of liberation from a male-dominated society, and allowed them to devote themselves to interests beyond the family. They felt that a new day was dawning and they yearned to join the mainstream of American life, where educational, economic, and political opportunities were available The South had always been more conservative in its attitudes toward the role of women, but even here there seemed to be an enthusiasm expressed by females as they approached the twentieth century. A few even believed it would be possible to move from "pedestal to politics," to enter the mundane and hitherto forbidden areas of public and political life.[23]

Women's clubs became a major vehicle for their members to participate in social and political matters. Still wearing "bustles, corsets, and stays," more and more

females began to venture forth to challenge the entrenched views of themselves and society. This spiritual and political awakening would have major consequences, for though the women lacked the franchise and other political rights, their clubs became mediums for progressive social change. Women's organizations in Florida and elsewhere made a major impact on life in America. Club leaders, like May Jennings, left an indelible mark on Florida's political, educational, and social institutions.

The Florida woman's club movement spread rapidly. Organizations were formed throughout the state during the 1890s, following the establishment of the Green Cove Springs club, the state's oldest, established in 1883.[24] During the 1890s female reading societies and village improvement associations appeared everywhere, no town seemed to be too small for such an organization. Ladies met in their homes to study history, literature, music, art, and political science. They also participated in charity work, which usually encouraged them to discuss community problems. Many females came to realize that they had a responsibility to help resolve problems relating to education, housing, health, libraries, parks, crime, and sanitation. They met with local officials in an attempt to coax or coerce them into taking action. Political involvement at first was tempered by timidity and circumspection but as the women gained confidence their goals and tactics became bolder.[25]

Their pathway was often impeded by ridicule, disappointments, and defeats. Successes in the early days of the movement were few. Confrontations with male public officials were routine and left each club with its own "hairraising" story to insert into its minutes books.

In the early period, 1890-1920, club membership was confined almost entirely to women from affluent, upper-middle-class families. Women like May Jennings became the leaders of the clubs, for they were well educated, possessed organizational abilities, and many were good public speakers. At first most of the clubs were little more than social gatherings with teas, cotillions, musicales, and garden parties consuming most of the members' time and energies, but as time passed this situation changed. Soon the women were studying social problems in depth, writing position papers, circulating petitions, and making public speeches.[26]

Florida's early clubs sometimes had amusing names. Many names were purposely obscure for the women seemed to want to avoid publicity so as not to call attention either to themselves or their organizations. Unusual club names in Florida included the Fortnightly Club of Palatka, Housekeepers of Coconut Grove, Progressive Culture Club of Titusville, Caxtons of Pensacola, Entre Nous of West Palm Beach, Current Topic Club of Lake City, Twentieth Century Club of Gainesville, Avila of Rockledge, and the Literary

and Debating Club of Melrose. There were also village improvement associations. Of course the names fooled no one; everyone knew they were women's clubs even if they did not sound like them.

Most of the clubs eventually changed their names to something more identifiable. For example, Brooksville women first organized as the Whittier Club, became the Ladies' Improvement Society, and finally became the Brooksville Woman's Club. Whatever the designation, the organizations furnished the comaraderie, intellectual stimulation, and leadership training which the women sought. Usually the first goal of each club was to build a clubhouse on a prominent site in town. Many of these structures were still standing in 1980. In smaller towns these buildings often served as the community center.

By 1895 there were enough clubs and intercommunication between them for a statewide meeting to be held to discuss federation. Such arrangements among women's clubs had already occurred in other states. There was even a new national federation, the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC), composed of state federations, which had been organized in New York City in 1894.[27] The GFWC eventually became a powerful organization with headquarters and lobbyists located in Washington, D.C. Through the years the GFWC would work for municipal and national governmental reforms, child labor legislation, penal reform, equitable taxation,

improved public education, health laws, and national conservation laws. The strength of the General Federation was to lie in its numbers. By 1914 every state federation had joined it and it represented more than two million American women.

The General Federation offered up to twenty different subjects to study, including everything from political science, music and art, to conservation, and public health. Subjects were dropped and others added as the times and political interests of the women dictated. The General Federation held a biennial convention in a large, major American city every two years, at which programs were presented on the different subjects, called departments in the Federation, after which the women would vote on pertinent issues that they wanted to push in the halls of government. In 1980 the General Federation of Women's Clubs was still a viable organization with its headquarters in Washington.

On February 21, 1895, eight women representing five village associations met in the library of the Green Cove Springs Village Improvement Association.[28] Attending were Mrs. E.N. Burrows, Mrs. E.V. Low, Mrs. E.G. Munsell, and Mrs. E.A. Graves, Green Cove Springs; Mrs. S.B. Safford, Tarpon Springs; Mrs. Emma C. Tebbetts, Crescent City; Mrs. S.L. Morse, Orange City, and Mrs. L.E. Wamboldt, Fairfield.[29] That same day the women voted to federate their clubs and thereby established the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs

(FFWC). The constitution and by-laws set forth the objective: "To bring the women's clubs [of Florida] into acquaintance and mutual helpfulness."[30] Clubs applying for membership were expected to be "free from sectarian or political bias and [to express] the spirit of progress on broad and humane lines."[31] The Federation was governed by a state president, lesser officers, and a board of directors, which was to be composed of veteran clubwomen. All officers served two year terms.

At first some Florida clubs refused to join the state federation, accusing it of "radicalism." This was particularly true of the conservative panhandle area of the state, yet the Federation grew. In 1910 it contained thirty-six clubs representing 1600 women; by 1914 some 6,000 women had joined.[32]

The Federation's organizational framework was patterned after the General's, which it joined the following year. Starting with only one section it was eventually divided into five state sections, formed by combining contiguous counties. By 1920 there were twelve sections, each headed by a vice-president who worked under the state president.[33] Each section held an annual meeting; once a year the whole Federation met in convention. The first statewide convention was held in 1896 at Green Cove Springs.[34] In the early years delegates sometimes had to overcome formidable odds just to attend the conventions; long

distances between cities, poor traveling facilities, and opposition from skeptical and hostile family members. Only eleven women attended the fourth annual state convention which met in Jacksonville in 1899.

The Florida Federation's departments were the same as the General's, but as each state was allowed its own variations, Florida had additional ones. These included departments which promoted bird protection, forestry, waterways, good roads, and the Seminole Indians. Florida women reflected a more than ordinary interest in the development and conservation of the state's natural resources. As in the General Federation the departments in the state federation were added and dropped as interests dictated.

From its inception in 1895 the Florida Federation was a politically-minded organization. The first official action taken by the women at the historic Green Cove Springs meeting, in 1895, was to direct each of the five member clubs to "hold a meeting for the purpose of drawing up a petition to the legislature of Florida, praying it to recind the act [which] allowed cattle to run at large in towns of less than twelve hundred inhabitants."[35] Thus was the Federation's first legislative program launched. The animal problem was a familiar one to Floridians. May Jennings and her sister clubwomen had tackled the problem in Brooksville as early as 1891. Amazingly the fledgling Federation almost made good on its stated objective for

"on May 6, 1895, Mr. Fleming introduced in the senate, Bill Number 284, amending the act defining what cities shall impound live cattle." The bill passed the Senate on May 17, but failed in the House.[36]

The battle over free roaming and tick-laden Florida livestock had begun. It was to become one of the longest and toughest battles the Federation was ever to face. The Florida range industry was one of the state's most powerful and entrenched interests, and it proved to be a formidable foe. Lucy Blackman, historian of the Florida Federation, writing in the 1930s, described the consequences of that 1895 call to legislative action as follows: "Thus has it been for more than thirty years that between the Federation of Women's Clubs and the Legislature of Florida, the sacred Florida cow has been an everpresent bone of contention--skin and bone literally. It looks as though there might be thirty more years of contention ahead of us before this ticky and emaciated beast shall have been sufficiently immersed and groomed, and made fit for good society. I can promise the legislators of those coming days that the Federation women will still be on hand with their resolutions and persuasions."[37] Mrs. Blackman's prediction was true for the livestock problem was not completely resolved until the 1960s. The Federation ladies stood strong and adamant during the long battle, with May Jennings leading much of the fight.

From 1895 the Federation was never without a legislative program. At each annual convention the clubwomen would discuss the major issues pertinent to the organization's departments, and then by motion and vote produce a political action program which would become the following year's goal. This uniform, statewide solidarity on issues was one of the keys to the Federation's successes. Since the Federation objectives became the goals of each club, then each member was a fighter for the cause. A word from the leadership was enough to flood the legislature or special officials with hundreds of letters and telegrams. Some of the Federation's favorite programs took many years to accomplish. The fight for compulsory school attendance laws lasted fourteen years. The struggle to preserve part of tropical south Florida took more than forty years; the battle over unfenced and undipped livestock was waged over a period of seventy years. Many of the Federation's most spectacular successes occurred during its first twenty-five years. Success often depended on the calibre of the organization's leadership. Fortunately, women with the required talents were there when needed. The Federation's legislative committee, which was established in 1908, had the direct responsibility of seeing that the organization's political program was publicized and presented to the state's representatives at each session of the legislature. By necessity, the women who chaired this committee had to be

articulate and politically knowledgeable. Few were to equal May Jennings in political astuteness, and she served as a member of this important committee longer than any other woman in the Federation's history.

Through the years the FFWC supported a myriad of political objectives. Gradually the organization was to become conservative in its political point of view, but, during its early history, it was as progressive as any organization in Florida. Although it supposedly was non-partisan, there was always a conservative faction in the Federation which opposed the more progressive majority. Nevertheless, for its day, the Federation was a liberal organization.

During its first decades several themes tended to repeat themselves in the Federation's political programs. Ever concerned about "social purity," i.e. morality, and aware that their sex did not have full economic or legal rights, the women continually tried to upgrade the status of women in these areas. In 1897 they petitioned the legislature to raise the female age of moral and legal consent from age ten to twenty-one. In 1901 the age was finally set at eighteen. The Federation ladies worked for legislation which would protect the family and female and children's rights. In 1911 the organization issued a booklet titled Some Laws of Importance to Women in Florida.[38] It was the first of many pamphlets on female rights published in Florida.

Public education was another issue which the Federation consistently promoted. As early as 1901 the women were urging the establishment of tax-funded kindergartens, modernized school curricula, improved teacher training, compulsory attendance laws, adequate public funding, and females being appointed to school boards. For twenty years the Federation sponsored a free traveling library which was open to the public and used by the public schools.

Conservation and beautification were also promoted by the Federation. These issues were particularly championed by a small but vocal group of south Florida women. At the Federation's 1905 convention several of these ladies introduced a motion which would have far-reaching consequences for Florida and the nation. The motion as adopted advocated the creation of "a Federal forest reservation of Paradise Key in the Everglades, in order to preserve the unique groups of Royal Palms, this being the only spot in the United States where these palms are found growing naturally."[39] When May became president of the Federation years later she used this motion, which was still on the Federation's books, to help bring its promises to fruition. The Federation also worked to get a state Forestry Commission established.

From the beginning the Federation was concerned with public health and child care. In these areas the clubwomen were usually far ahead of local and state health officials.

In 1907 the clubwomen began selling Christmas seals, with proceeds going into anti-tuberculosis work. They sponsored "health days" in the public schools. In 1910 the organization sponsored a speaking tour by Dr. Ellen Lowell Stevens, female doctor and clubwoman. In 1911 clubwomen in Jacksonville were responsible for the establishment of a State Conference of Charities. The Federation was also a major pressure group which brought about the creation of the state's first tuberculosis sanitarium and school for the retarded and feeble-minded.

The Federation's impact was first felt at the local level. Each club became a vehicle for social and civic change within its own community. In 1899 the Green Cove Springs Village Improvement Association launched a city beautification program, organized a forestry and bird club, and provided funding and staffing for a free public library. The St. Petersburg Women's Town Improvement Association worked to get an ordinance which would prevent loose chickens and other fowl from polluting public sidewalks and roadways. Other clubs were protecting birds, planting trees, cleaning streets, and establishing libraries; "sidewalks, bicycle paths, fences, and even school houses were built by these intrepid women."[40] They raised money for their projects

by sponsoring exhibitions, banquets, and candy and bake sales. The women's good works were being felt and acknowledged across the state.

The clubwomen's activities were not always welcomed by the general public. City and county officials were often startled and usually perplexed when groups of local ladies marched into their offices, demanding that they clean up the communities and provide better services. Male consternation and anger were often confounded by the fact that the women confronting them were their very own wives, daughters, sisters, and mothers. Lucy Blackman refers to these pioneer clubwomen as "heroines" and "captains courageous." She states that they were consistently faced with "the old Adam war-cry 'Woman's Place Is In The Home,' which reverberated through the pines and over the rivers and lakes and oceans from Pensacola to Key West."[41] One of these women, a member of one of Jacksonville's most prominent families, remembered that in those early days she was often reviled for associating with such an "iniquitious movement" as a woman's club.[42] Others recalled "that the men of the towns were bitter in their denunciations of Women's Clubs [but] that there were always enough women with spinal cords starched stiff, who raised eyebrows and went forth anyway to do as they saw fit."[43]

If local officials resented the women, the members of Florida's all-male legislature were especially indignant.

Their ridicule, sarcasm, and mockery was routinely reported in the state's newspapers. It seems that the women had an "annoying habit of talking back to the legislators after they had been told politely to go home and tend their babies."[44] With the exceptions of the two Jacksonville papers, the Florida Times-Union and the Metropolis, early allies, most of the state press was skeptical of what the women were trying to do. In an editorial "No Women in Politics Please," the Jacksonville Sun pleaded for some way to "save us from this catastrophe."[45]

A writer in Florida Magazine wondered "What will the twentieth century woman be?" after observing that changes in manners and habits of thought had brought about radical "new conditions" in the domestic sphere.[46] And the Ladies Home Journal wishfully noted that "The tide of women rushing pellmell into all kinds of business has been stemmed."[47] Of course, the tide was not stemmed and women in Florida and elsewhere began to take their rightful place in public life.

May Jennings, more than any other female in Florida, was to personify the new civic-minded twentieth-century woman. Her rise to prominence would begin in the Jacksonville Woman's Club.

Notes to Chapter V

[1]Jennings was a director of the Leesburg State Bank and the State Bank of Ybor City. An income statement for 1905 shows that the family spent $5,957 on living expenses, $2,866 on law office expenses, and $30,733 on investments. WSJ Papers, Box 20.

[2]Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, May 23, 1964.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Governor Jennings' desk is in the possession of Dorothy Jennings Sandridge.

[5]A.S. Mann to W.S. Jennings, June 30, 1907. WSJ Papers, Box 22.

[6]Jacksonville City Directory, 1912 (Jacksonville, 1912), n.p.

[7]Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, May 23, 1964.

[8]Interview with Dorothy Brown Jennings, July 27, 1978. Penney Farms, Florida.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Jacksonville Metropolis, April 20, 1908.

[11]For a description of Jennings' role in resolving the legal problems which threatened the drainage project see W.S. Jennings, "Florida's Public Lands," Legislative Bluebook, 1917, pp. 55-78.

[12]Jacksonville Metropolis, April 13, 1907.

[13]W.S. Jennings to William Jennings Bryan, November 20, 1908. WSJ Papers, Box 22.

[14]Itemized list of trip supplies. WSJ Papers, Box 24. For additional details about the trip see Alfred J. and Katherine A. Hanna, Lake Okeechobee, Wellspring of the Everglades (Indianapolis, 1948), pp. 159-161.

[15]Miami City Map, 1918; Miami City Directory, 1919.

[16]For the story of the Everglades project and Jennings', Broward's, and Bolle's roles in it see Hanna, Okeechobee, pp. 118-172.

[17]Jacksonville Metropolis, February 28, 1906.

[18]Arch Fredric Blakey, Parade of Memories, History of Clay County, Florida (Jacksonville, 1976), pp. 187-188. The majority of the Clay County land was still in the hands of the Jennings family in 1980.

[19]Jacksonville Woman's Club to May Jennings, November 25, 1905. MMJ Papers, Box 2.

[20]Jacksonville Metropolis, March 16, 1907.

[21]Souvenir zum Verbandsfest, 1907. May Jennings' copy of the Saengerfest program can be seen in the Haydon Burns City Library, Jacksonville, Florida.

[22]For a short history of the women's movements of the nineteenth century and the role played by southern women see Anne F. Scott, The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930 (Chicago, 1970), passim.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Jennie June Croley, The History of the Woman's Club Movement in America (New York, 1898), p. 155. Green Cove Springs is designated the site of Florida's first woman's club.

[25]Margaret Nell Price, "The Development of Leadership by Southern Women Through Clubs and Organization" (M.A. thesis, University of North Carolina, 1945), passim.

[26]Karen J. Blair, "The Clubwoman as Feminist: The Woman's Culture Club Movement in the United States, 1868-1914" (Ph.D. dissertation, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1976), passim.

[27]Croley, The History of the Woman's Club Movements in America, p. 55

[28]Blackman, The Women of Florida, I, p. 129.

[29]Ibid., p. 127.

[30]Florida Federation of Women's Clubs hereafter referred to as the Federation or the FFWC. The General Federation of Women's Clubs hereafter referred to as the General or the GFWC.

[31]Blackman, The Women of Florida, I, p. 130.

[32]List of clubs in the FFWC, 1914. See Appendix II.

[33]List of presidents of FFWC. See Appendix III.

[34]Location of first twenty-five FFWC conventions. See Appendix IV.

[35]Blackman, The Women of Florida, I, p. 131.

[36]Ibid., p. 130.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Florida Federation of Women's Clubs, Some Laws of Interest to Florida Women (Jacksonville, 1914).

[39]Blackman, The Women of Florida, I, p. 153. The two women who introduced the resolution were Mary Barr Munroe (Mrs. Kirk Munroe) and Edith Gifford (Mrs. John Gifford).

[40]Ibid., p. 130.

[41]Ibid., p. 132.

[42]Ibid., p. 133.

[43]Ibid.

[44]Ibid., p. 136.

[45]Jacksonville Sun, December 2, 1905.

[46]Florida Magazine, I, November, 1900, p. 105.

[47]Ladies Home Journal quoted in Florida Magazine, IV, March, 1902.

CHAPTER VI
". . . AN ENTHUSIASTIC CLUBWOMAN"

The Jacksonville Woman's Club became one of the state's largest and most influential women's clubs. It had its beginnings on January 20, 1897, when forty women met at the Windsor Hotel across from Hemming Park to organize a club for the "mutual improvement [and] entertainment of its members, [and] for the cultivation of the amenities of social life, and to give aid to all worthy objects."[1] Thus its purpose was threefold: self-improvement, entertainment, and good works. The women represented the city's most affluent and prominent families, and included Lula Paine Fletcher (Mrs. Duncan U.), Julia Furcghgott (Mrs. Leonard), Katherine Livingston Egan (Mrs. Dennis), Cordelia Durkee (Mrs. J.H.), Lucy Colby Wamboldt (Mrs. N.C.), and Lizzie Marsh Yerkees (Mrs. J.B.). Later members came from the Cummer, L'Engle, Barnett, Meigs, Broward, and Young families. By 1907 the club had 215 members.

Soon after its establishment the Jacksonville club began offering a full slate of activities. Reading and study classes were organized; a nurse was hired to visit the city's poor and sick; and art and flower shows were held to raise money for the public schools and St. Luke's Hospital. When the great fire of 1901 nearly destroyed

Jacksonville the club supplied most of the workers for the Woman's Relief Corp. By 1904, the year that a clubhouse was constructed at 18 East Duval Street, the club had become an influential member of the city's social and civic establishment. In 1927 a more spacious club home was built on Riverside Avenue.[2]

In 1906 the club supported a pure food and drug exposition by arranging a parade of decorated baby coaches and "goat carriages" on Bay Street. A woman's lounge was opened in the club building for downtown shoppers and female employees to use as a "haven of rest." In 1907 the clubwomen protested to city hall about the "cows roaming free" throughout Springfield, and they petitioned the Board of Public Works to provide playgrounds in the parks. The club had become so successful at getting things done that Claude L'Engle editorialized in the Jacksonville Dixie that "Womens' Clubs with the wonderfully feminine energies underlying them, have the levers in their possession like old Atlas to move Mother Earth off of its pegs."[3]

During the Jacksonville club's first decade the women studied such disparate items as forestry, opera, flower arranging, conservation, municipal reform, Milton's Paradise Lost, child care, legends of Florida, bacteria, Shakespeare's plays, birds, Greek architecture, the legal status of women, and the nebula hypothesis. Two other subjects on the agenda were ship canals, perhaps suggested by May Jennings, and

the question, "Are We Healthier and Happier Than Our Grandmothers?" To the latter the women answered in the affirmative, but the real importance of the question lay not in the fact that the women answered "yes," but that they had asked the question at all. It reflected just how far they had come since "the good old days."

After joining the Jacksonville club in 1905, May became one of its most active members. She was popular with most of the women, but her energy, deep commitment to social progress, and her political bravura were a source of alarm to the club's more staid and conservative members. Some of the ladies felt that she was too interested in politics and might involve the club in controversy. Lucy Blackman states that the women's clubs were "the most democratic organizations in the world" for they asked for no "ancient lineage, adherance to a particular political creed, or specific religious belief."[4] This was true, but like all organizations which drew its members from an elite clientile the women's clubs tended to be exclusive. New members had to be sponsored, and only a few lower-middle-class or Jewish women were ever invited to join. Victorian morality and social conservatism made some of the clubwomen frown on anyone who was not of the accepted class or who had talents or ideas which might "rock the boat." May had impeccable credentials, but she was different from most of her associates in that she was not afraid of controversy or

confrontation. In fact, she seemed to thrive on them. A few of the Jacksonville members never truly accepted her, and later they accused her of "playing politics" and of "grandstanding" for personal attention. Many seemed not to understand the importance of the work that she and other Florida clubwomen were undertaking. To many women the objectives of their clubs and of the Federation were commendable, but they resented anything that interfered with their own socializing or family responsibilities. To May, efforts expended to achieve the Federation's political objectives were not only serious business, but also a form of social and intellectual entertainment. Her sense of citizenship and nobless oblige gave clubwork a higher meaning than many of her contemporaries were able to accept. Dedication and commitment played a central role in her lifelong avocation of civic and public service.

Many of May's rivals and harshest critics were women very much like herself: highly motivated, intelligent, and strong willed. Mrs. Minerva Jennings (Mrs. Frank E.), no relation, and Margaret Young (Mrs. William B.), fell into this category. Like May both were married to prominent men and they were much involved in civic work in Jacksonville. May was to clash with them often over club policy and tactics. The rivalry between the women occasionally threatened to erupt into open hostility, but usually the competition remained hidden and out of public sight. While never

petty, May's quick tongue and overwhelming sense of self-assurance sometimes made people fear her. The majority of women that she worked with over the years supported her and her ideas, even though some may have been awed by her abilities. One admirer later wrote, "Mrs. Jennings shows a marked degree of disregard of cliques. [She] has risen superior to them. In fact fairness is one of the attributes that has been most salient in all that she has done. She is approachable at all times."[5] Through the years May was to garner a sizable group of loyal supporters.

May Jennings was interested and active in so many things during her lifetime that she might be accurately described as a renaissance woman. She was interested in art, music, and drama. Through careful organization of her time she was able to involve herself in many different types of civic, club, and political matters and projects at the same time. While involved in the many activities of the Friday Musicale she could also solicit funds for an orphanage, lead a petition drive, organize political tactics for a lobbying effort on the legislature, and also maintain a full entertainment and travel schedule. Her interests and her ability to work assiduously for disparate movements reveals a woman with an active mind and much physical energy. May Jennings could comfortably work on a host of club, civic, and political projects simultaneously. She retained this ability and her peripatetic lifestyle all of her life.

Occasionally she would narrow her vision and concentrate for the moment on one project, but it was usually for just long enough to get some favorite project begun moving, or terminated. The pace she set for herself was astonishing. Few women were able to match either the number of projects she promoted, the number of clubs she belonged to, the many people, prominent and less well known, she knew on a first name basis, or the intensity of effort which she brought to her work. Her name appeared frequently in the newspapers and on the rosters of many scores of clubs and organizations. By 1910 she was well known by the general public, and four years later when she became president of the Florida Federation of Woman's Clubs she was the most prominent woman in the state.

May Jennings hated inaction. She was a doer, and she saw inaction as weakness. When named to head a committee or assigned a responsibility she immediately began making plans and organizing the workers necessary to get the objective accomplished. She was somewhat unusual; most of her associates lacked either confidence in their own abilities or the experience to take on difficult tasks. The Jacksonville club's yearbooks for 1906 and 1907 list her as a member of the social purity committee, and as chairman of the civics committee. For the next several years she chaired the club's legislation committee. The earliest record of her leading a movement was on a project which the

Jacksonville club undertook in the summer of 1906. Characteristically, she chose to make it into a statewide crusade. It involved railroad depots.

Jacksonville was known as the "gateway to Florida." Hundreds of thousands of tourists passed through the city each year; most of them traveling by train. The local depot was a decrepit and uncomfortable building which did not put either Jacksonville or Florida in the best light to visitors. In 1906 the Jacksonville's Woman's Club members decided that the old station needed a facelift. A committee, with May Jennings as chairman, was formed to look into the situation. She argued that the women should not limit their efforts to Jacksonville. The problem was statewide; most of Florida's depots were antiquated and uncomfortable. The women passed a resolution, the first of many such documents bearing May's signature, calling for a statewide campaign to repair, clean, and beautify every depot in the state.[6] Local citizens in each community were called upon to lead the effort. May mailed a copy of the resolution to every town government, village improvement association, woman's club, newspaper, and railroad official in the state she could ascertain. The Jacksonville officials who received copies also received a personal "lecture" on the problem from May and her committee members.

Publication of the resolution throughout Florida helped to rally public opinion. May and her cohorts had

put state and local authorities on notice that Florida clubwomen were a force to be reckoned with. Unfortunately, the results of the campaign were mixed, and many station masters refused to cooperate in cleaning up their depots. However, enough interest was stirred that R. Hudson Burr, state railroad commissioner, who had received a personal note from May, felt impelled to make an inspection tour of the railroads' public facilities. Newsmen noted that Burr was unfavorably impressed with what he found and was particularly appalled by conditions at the Brooksville station.[7]

Despite railroad resistance and lethargy among town officials, May was pleased that the resolution had stirred up public interest and had forced state officials to take some action. The campaign showed that if women acted together they could affect the quality of public life. In November 1907 May attended the thirteenth annual FFWC convention in Gainesville. It was her first recorded attendance at a Federation convention. While there she reported that the railroad campaign, while not an overwhelming success, had significantly improved depots in some of the state's major cities, like Jacksonville, Tampa, and Tallahassee. On her return to Jacksonville the Metropolis described her as "a very important member of the Florida circle of club women."[8]

In 1907, as chairman of the civics committee, May began working on behalf of child welfare, a cause which was

to consume much of her energy in the next decade. She began her work at first with the State Reform School at Marianna. Clubwomen had shown an interest in the institution since its establishment in 1897, and many deplored the harsh and unsanitary conditions at the school. Facilities were inadequate, and the inmates were often mistreated. The majority of children were black, three were girls. Medical attention was lacking and the mortality rate was high. The inmates received little formal education and no religious or moral teachings. Boys as young as ten years were observed working the school's farm with their feet shackled by chains.[9]

Efforts to establish a Florida juvenile court system, improve the juvenile penal system, and public education, and regulate child labor were loosely grouped together in what was termed the child welfare movement. Various organizations were involved.[10] The movement was given a major impetus when the conditions at Marianna were publicized. In 1907 Governor Broward called for doubling the appropriation to the school, to $10,000 per annum. May supported this action and made the improvement of the Marianna school the major objective of her committee. She read a paper to the club that she had written about the conditions there, and then called for a memorial to the legislature endorsing Broward's request. The women stated that they "heartily agreed that the institution should be made a real Reformatory School [with industrial training] and not be a

Juvenile Prison."[11] The memorial, signed by May and 173 Jacksonville clubwomen, was sent to the governor, the cabinet, and each legislator. Telegrams and letters poured in from the women, and the 1907 legislature, one of the state's most progressive, not only heeded the governor's request concerning the reform school, but it also passed Florida's first comprehensive child labor law.[12] Mrs. C.H. Raynor, Federation president, was presented the pen with which Broward signed this bill. May was pleased for she had written or talked to every official that she knew in support of the bills.

There was still much to be done at the state level to secure better conditions and rights for children. When the 1909 legislature convened, several other organizations united with the clubwomen. They included the Florida State Federation of Labor, and a loose confederation of private child welfare agencies led by Marcus Fagg, superintendent of the Children's Home Society of Jacksonville, Florida's largest orphanage. Led by May, Jacksonville clubwomen again submitted a resolution to the legislature.[13] This time it called for a $25,000 yearly appropriation to the Marianna institution. Albert W. Gilchrist, who was now governor, was visited by May and received personally a copy of the new resolution.[14] She also delivered a memorial from the club supporting another more comprehensive child labor bill which was ready for the legislature.[15] Unfortunately, she was

unable to remain in Tallahassee to lobby for the bills. Despite a full-scale letter writing campaign by clubwomen and personal lobbying by Marcus Fagg, the 1909 legislature refused to increase the reform school's appropriation or to enact the child labor bill. It did, however, appoint a committee to inspect the facility at Marianna. Undaunted, May and the clubwomen vowed to continue the work. The year 1911 would be a crucial year in the struggle for child welfare legislation.

Determined to help the school, the Federation's legislative committee devoted the years 1910-1911 to a study of the reformatory. The committee was now led by Susan B. Wight (Mrs. Henry) of Sanford, an aggressive leader. The school was still underfunded, and the women believed that the special legislative committee of 1909 had "whitewashed" its report on conditions at the school. One morning soon after the lawmakers had issued this report Mrs. Wight and Mrs. Willian B. Young, "put on their hats, and, uninvited and unannounced and unexpected and evidently unwanted, arrived at the Reformatory for a spend-the-day visit."[16] The report these women issued created a sensation in Florida, and it gave progressives the ammunition they thought they needed to convince the legislature that the school was a disgrace. May, now chairman of the Jacksonville club's legislation committee, again submitted a resolution on behalf of the school to the 1911 legislature. She felt that by

working with labor, Marcus Fagg, and Mrs. Wight's committee, the needed bill would now be enacted. To help the cause the Federation published a small pamphlet entitled Plea for the Marianna Reform School, which was mailed to all legislators, women's clubs, and newspapers. Speakers traveled throughout the state, among them Mrs. Wight, Mrs. Young, Mrs. Frank Jennings, Marcus Fagg, and May Jennings to lobby among citizens groups on behalf of the bill.

The women's 1911 resolution to the legislature urged the lawmakers to adequately fund the Marianna school, but it also called for enactment of a series of progressive laws, including compulsory education, a child labor law, and the prohibition of horse racing and all kinds of bookmaking and betting in the state. The women worked hard to get the legislation enacted. Unfortunately, for the second time May was unable to spend time in Tallahassee and neither was Mrs. Wight. The women had pinned their hopes on J.C. Privett of the state labor organization and Mr. Fagg, but halfway through the session labor withdrew its support of the compulsory education bill. Toward the end of the session Privett recommended as a substitute for the child labor bill, a measure which would create a bureau of labor and statistics. As a consequence the child labor bill was allowed to die in committee. Mr. Fagg notified May, and urged her to ask the women to contact their representatives. May immediately sent urgent telegrams to clubwomen around

the state. Florence Cay, wife of a Tallahassee businessman and former legislator, was asked to "do everything possible to get child labor bill reconsidered. The legislation is the only protection of the helpless children's best interests against corporate wealth, and for humanity's sake passage of bill should be urged. Conservation of the child is our first duty."[17] The women's effort was for nought; the bill did not pass.

The 1911 legislative session proved to be a mixed blessing. The reform school's appropriation was increased to $17,500 per annum, and a landmark juvenile court measure, which revolutionized juvenile justice in Florida, was passed. However, the legislature refused to enact either the child labor bill or the compulsory education bill. May was pleased with the progress attained, but she had learned a valuable lesson; if lobbying was needed it had to be done personally. This was not a responsibility to be entrusted to third parties. She looked on Privett and his organization as self-serving and opportunistic, and was thereafter reluctant to work with them. Her association with Fagg continued, however. When the 1913 legislature convened May was in a more important position, and many legislators would learn before the session ended just how personally persuasive she could be. She was still interested in child welfare but in another aspect. She had become the Federation's state chairman of education and worked with a

committee of five, one of whom was Virginia Trammell, the governor's wife.

Concurrent with her activity on behalf of child welfare, May was involved in other causes. In 1907 she became connected with a movement which kept the city of Jacksonville in turmoil for many weeks. The temperance and prohibition movements were on the ascendancy throughout the nation, particularly the South. Prohibitionists in Duval County had tried unsuccessfully to use the local option clause in the Florida constitution and make Duval "dry." In 1907 several events occurred which encouraged Jacksonville temperance advocates to try again. First, many counties in South Carolina and Georgia voted to adopt prohibition, and this led to an influx of breweries and liquor establishments into north Florida. Second, a neighborhood protective association was organized when whisky interests attempted to expand into the pleasant, tree-lined suburb of Springfield. Finally, several counties in Florida voted to go "dry" in 1906 and 1907.

Disturbed by the encroachment of the liquor interests and cheered by successes elsewhere, local businessmen, including former Governor Jennings, formed the Duval County Prohibition League to collect signatures for a petition to be presented to the city council, calling for a "wet-dry" referendum. Opposing this effort was the Business Men's Association. Prohibition was a controversial and emotional

issue and as the campaign to get signatures increased, the county became polarized. Friends, business partners, and even families took opposing stands on the issue.

Midway into the campaign women favoring the petition move met at the First Baptist Church and organized the Women's Prohibition League. May Jennings was elected president, and Mrs. Duncan U. Fletcher was chosen vice-president.[18] Within a month the organization had over 250 members. May quickly began organizing rallies and signing up workers for the cause. Women were assigned to canvass every block in the city's wards. Late in November the women sponsored a public rally held in a large tent on West Adams Street. As the campaign heated up so did the rhetoric. The "drys" were accused of selling their "birthrights for a mess of prohibition pottage."[19] Those favoring the free sale of liquor were said to be in cahoots with the Devil. Evangelists and clergymen of every persuasion descended upon the city to preach at impromptu rallies and harangue citizens on the city's downtown streets, while local ministers used their own pulpits to exhort their congregations to vote the "right way."

In early 1908 May wrote Governor Broward an indignant letter concerning the many "blind tigers" (illicit liquor establishments) which she claimed state and local officials were allowing to proliferate in northeast Florida. She received a rather cool reply from the governor and denials

from sheriffs in the affected counties. In February of that year Carrie Nation, the famous "Kansas Saloon Smasher," visited Jacksonville as part of a statewide tour. May scored a triumph when she persuaded Mrs. Nation to address the Women's Prohibition League. Mrs. Nation, who said she "used her tongue now" instead of an axe to smash barrooms, delivered what was described as a rousing pep talk. Mrs. Nation's addresses always "contained a liberal sprinkling of quotations from scripture on the evils of alcohol mixed with harsh words for local politicians and saloon keepers and their patrons."[20] At the reception which followed her speech, Mrs. Nation passed out her famous red lapel pins which were shaped like hatchets. For the duration of the campaign May prominently displayed her pin on the collar of her dresses.

Despite their work, the prohibitionist campaign failed. The city council noted technical irregularities in the petition, and the antis- on the council refused to vote to call a special election. Disappointed but not deterred, prohibitionists vowed to continue the struggle. In 1910 a state prohibition constitution amendment was defeated by Florida voters. In 1916 the prohibition issue played a major role in Sidney J. Catts' gubernatorial campaign, and, of course, in 1919 the eighteenth amendment to the United States Constitution made prohibition the law of the land.

May Jennings' involvement in the prohibition movement reflected more than just an intellectual or moral approval of the issue. She had firsthand knowledge of the dangers inherent in liquor. Her brother was an alcoholic, and he had caused the family embarrassment and grief. May had found it necessary to provide financially for his wife and children. Personal sorrow also motivated her prohibition work; her brother and his wife would both die young. May's prohibition sentiments were therefore deeply felt and remained with her all her life. She continued to support prohibitionists, particularly the Florida Anti-Saloon League. There is no record, however, that she ever belonged to the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

In 1909 May became the leader of a committee of clubwomen whose work resulted in improvements in the Duval County penal system. In January of that year Katherine Eagan spoke to a group of women about the deplorable conditions existing at the city jail, a facility nicknamed "Raspberry Park." The Jacksonville Metropolis had condemned the jail in articles and editorials, calling it a disgrace and little more than "a hole in the wall."[21] May's committee was supposed to look into the situation. Within the week she addressed the city council and invited its members to accompany her and her committee on a tour of the facility. On February 1, 1909, she, Mrs. Waldo Cummer, Mrs. Guy Pride, and councilmen

St. Elmo Acosta, Maurice Slager, and Whitfield Walker visited the jail. The group was appalled; the situation was even worse than they had been told.

The jail accommodations consisted of two rooms: one 40' x 5' which housed sixty-seven black males, and the other 20' x 5' where there were seventeen white men. Neither cell had cots, windows, or sewerage. The stench was unbearable. Inmates slept on the stone floor, winter and summer. They received bread and water once a day and corned beef on Sundays. The city's health officer had never visited the place. May was outraged by what she saw. The Metropolis reported that the "club ladies will not rest until conditions are bettered at Raspberry Park."[22]

At the next council meeting officials listened to May's plans for improvements to the facility and then quickly voted to implement them; $967 was appropriated to add plumbing, enlarge the cells, and cut windows in the walls of the building. The clubwomen were still not satisfied, and they continued their surveillance of the facility. The following summer May went before the council again and secured an additional $300 to improve the building further.[23] Eventually the building was demolished, and a county penal farm was constructed past the city limits near north Main Street.

May continued her work on behalf of other organizations. In February 1910, she became an organizer and charter

member of the Katherine Livingston Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and, through this organization, over the years helped sponsor many patriotic events. In 1911 the chapter helped secure funds to purchase a silver service for the newly launched battleship Florida. When the ship was later decommissioned DAR members arranged for the service to be placed in the Florida governor's mansion. May served as a vice regent and later as state chairman of the organization's old trails and roads committee, and as head of its state library committee. For many years the Livingston Chapter sponsored "Flag Day" and "Americanism" programs in Duval County schools. During the first world war the chapter raised money for the Red Cross and for entertainment of soldiers stationed in the area. In the 1920s it paid for a scholarship for a veteran to attend the University of Florida. The Jacksonville DAR was also responsible for the monument at Mayport which commemorated the landing of Ribault and the French in the seventeenth century. Through the years May worked on behalf of the DAR chapter's goals and hosted many of its meetings in her home.[24]

May Jennings also worked on behalf of St. Luke's Hospital through the Jacksonville Woman's Club's health committee. She solicited funds for the hospital and worked diligently--lobbying and writing letters--to secure a contagious disease ward for the institution. She became

upset with hospital officials, however, when in 1914 the institution was moved to a new location in Springfield. May felt that it was an undesirable site so close to homes, a school, and other public buildings. It was also believed the hospital would lower area property values.

In 1911 May, Mrs. Bion H. Barnett, Mrs. W.B. Young, and other interested ladies met to discuss the establishment of a Young Women's Christian Association in the city. The men had constructed a Y.M.C.A. several years earlier. May was in charge of drawing up the by-laws and securing a charter for the new women's association.[25] She was also appointed to help raise money for the new enterprise. During the fund drive she wrote to her husband, "I canvassed for the Y.W.C.A. yesterday and got $212 without counting yours. We go again tomorrow, then we are going to strike."[26]

The Californian, a boarding house on Newnan Street, was leased as the Association's first home. Later, a large four-story building at 130 West Monroe Street was purchased.[27] May was elected to the Association's first board of directors, and she served until 1915. During her years on the board she headed the "Y's" physical department, which was supposed to provide the girls with the "right habits of life, healthful environment, and development of good physique."[28] May continued her interest in the association whether she was serving as an officer or not.

Continuing her many activities did not keep her busy in 1912 for that year she became president of the Springfield Improvement Association, later known as the Springfield Woman's Club. While serving as president, 1912-1914, she remained chairman of the Jacksonville Woman's Club legislation committee and held an office in the state Federation. However, the Springfield and Jacksonville clubs were friendly rivals, and May eventually resigned her membership in the Jacksonville club and retained her Springfield membership.

The Springfield club concerned itself mainly with Springfield matters. During May's first tenure as president of the club (she was reelected in 1920), the organization worked to preserve the suburban integrity of the area. It sponsored beautification programs, maintained Springfield Park, and sponsored band concerts during the summer. As the self-appointed watchdog for the area, the club gained a reputation as an activist organization. During the 1920s the club became involved in one of the hottest issues ever to confront the area. It concerned the removal of the Main Street esplanade and the destruction of many of the area's large oak trees. May Jennings was one of the leaders in the battle to save the esplanade, but she was not successful.

By 1912 May Jennings had become perhaps the best known woman in Florida. She had confronted almost every Jacksonville and Duval County official, and many on the state

level. It was generally acknowledged that she was very effective, and she was in demand to sponsor organizations or speak on behalf of special causes. Her popularity was abetted by the fact that through all of her civic work she had maintained her own aura of gentility and sense of decorum. The public perceived her as an honest, intelligent, but determined woman who had the best interests of all citizens at heart. She was also seen as a person who could stand up to authorities and get things done. The fact that she refrained from backing frivolous causes or participating in unseemly behavior made her appear sincere.

In 1912 May spoke before several religious groups. At the annual Baptist State Missionary Union at Lakeland she described to an audience of women what true public service meant to her, listing the many organizations--Y.W.C.A., Mother's Clubs, Women's Clubs--which needed workers. She urged women to work to purify and reform American life, and warned that if they did not, America's institutions might be destroyed by the influx of foreign-speaking immigrants that were flowing into the country in great numbers. She resented the fact that these immigrants, at least the men who became citizens, could participate in national and state elections, while she and other women who were native born, could not. She ended with the exhortation, "Let us be more practical with our religion,

and apply it to our own life work. There are comparatively few enlisted in public service. We need more recruits to lighten the burden of the few in this fast growing and much needed work."[29] In reporting her speech the Florida Times-Union noted that "Mrs. Jennings is an enthusiastic club-woman who sees herself and others as social workers."[30]

At the annual Federation convention at West Palm Beach in 1912, Elizabeth Hocker of Ocala was elected president of the organization. May became vice-president and chairman of the Federation's department of education, and thus a member of the board of directors, and part of the organization's inner circle. During Mrs. Hocker's term the Federation began its most vigorous decade of growth and political activity. She and May worked to strengthen the organization. They wrote letters of encouragement and spoke before many unaffiliated clubs urging them to join the Federation. The results were impressive. Susan Wight wrote May: "Good for you Lady, I am proud of you and our prospects for advances. Things are beginning to move. Our Federation is finally going to realize some dreams I've dared to entertain for it."[31] By 1913 the Federation had grown to include some seventy-two clubs with a combined membership of 3,600 women.

The Federation was able to select its leaders from among the ablest women in Florida, and clubs were making an impact on public opinion and legislation on every level--

local, county, and state. The Federation was no longer a joke, even to the legislature.[32] During the Hocker administration women in the clubs began to feel a real sense of statewide camaraderie. They sensed that they belonged to an important movement. The officers were a close-knit band of women who became warm personal friends. Convening regularly for board meetings, and through correspondence, and visiting in each other's homes this group developed into a sisterhood which had special meaning to each member. Their letters to one another changed from formal businesslike communications and began to include references to insider's jokes and to personal family matters. Some of the women even took to using nicknames. One club friend referred to May as "Lady Bug," while another addressed her as "My Dear Heavenly Twin," perhaps a reference to the fact that May was a Gemini on the astrological chart.[33] This spirit of fun, of family, and camaraderie coincided with the period of the Federation's greatest growth and most spectacular successes.

In 1912 May was the right person to head the Federation's department of education. Her interest in public education went back many years. She had supported her husband's work during his years as president of the Hernando High School board of trustees and while living in Tallahassee she had supported the move to provide free textbooks and increases in funding for public education. Twice she had

accompanied her husband when he had spoken before the Florida Education Association. He had served for many years as a trustee of Stetson University and, after leaving the governor's office, he continued to speak to various groups about the need for education legislation.[34] In Jacksonville May was an active member of the Springfield Mother's Club and had been instrumental in organizing the Duval County Federation of Mother's Clubs.[35] She served on the committee which had entertained delegates to the Florida Education Association's 1912 convention. In addition, the Jennings were personal friends of many of the state's most prominent educators. William N. Sheats, William H. Holloway, William Conradi, Lincoln Hulley, A.A. Murphree, and William F. Blackman had all been entertained at one time or another in the Jennings' Jacksonville home.

In 1910 State Superintendent William Holloway appointed May to the executive committee of the Florida Women's School Improvement Association. She served three years. Also on the committee was Lucy Blackman, May's close friend and wife of William F. Blackman. The objectives of the Association were to make "schools the center of gravity of community life and arouse in parents a greater sense of obligation and responsibility" to education.[36] The Association oversaw the establishment of local chapters which in turn were supposed to work for the establishment of

school libraries and improved school grounds. By 1911, 150 of these groups had been organized in the state.

Thus by the time May became head of the Federation's education department she had a good knowledge of the problems and needs of Florida's school system. She set to work organizing a program of action for the upcoming 1913 legislative session, including choosing a committee to work with her. It included Mrs. Park Trammell of Tallahassee, Mrs. J.C. Huber of Tampa, Rachel Gaines of Leesburg, Mariam Pasteur of Palatka, Mrs. Lee Spear of Fort Lauderdale, and Mrs. Charles Boneaker of Pensacola. One of the responsibilities of this committee was to raise funds for the Federation's scholarship, established in 1906, at the Florida State College for Women at Tallahassee, to train kindergarten teachers.

Shortly after assuming the chairmanship of the education department May met Agnes Ellen Harris of the home economics department of the women's college. In 1909 Harris had toured the state on behalf of the Federation and given a series of lectures on the subject of domestic science. May recommended that the Federation support Miss Harris in another endeavor. Rural extension work, being promoted by the United States Department of Agriculture in conjunction with the landgrant colleges, was being promoted throughout the South.[37] One aspect of the work was to urge counties to promote boys' and girls' corn and tomato clubs. There

were also potato, cotton, poultry, and hog clubs. These clubs were supposed to teach children, ages ten to eighteen, the rudiments of sowing, harvesting, canning, and marketing produce. Each child was to till a tenth of an acre and then market the harvest.[38] By 1912 thirteen Florida counties had enrolled in the project, and 622 girls had canned 18,000 cans of tomatoes which had been sold for thirteen cents a can.[39] Anges Harris was the agent in charge of the girls' clubs and Professor J.W. Vernon of the University of Florida worked with the boys' organizations.

May was impressed with Miss Harris' work and aware that she was getting little help from state officials. With approval from Mrs. Hocker May set up two Federation prizes, for the girl and boy who achieved the best annual production record. Each prize was worth $50.00 toward the winner's education. May persuaded officials of Cohen Brothers Department Store in Jacksonville to donate the sum for the boy's prize. She wrote each Federation club and urged them to donate to the girl's prize fund. She also asked each club to sponsor a tomato club in their respective counties. She herself helped establish a club in Middleburg near the Jennings' Clay County farm. The awarding of the prizes was a success and the prizes were continued until the nineteen-twenties at which time agricultural extension work was curtailed and the canning club program ended.

The Federation's education department also worked in other ways to improve public education. In February 1913 May sent a letter to each Federation club outlining her goals. She stated that her committee would direct every effort toward establishing vocational education throughout the state. As a first step each woman's club should make the school building in its own locality a social center. They should secure a good storyteller and establish "story hours" for the small children. They should use the building for fairs and exhibits. They should assist in establishing tomato clubs. They should help fund the prizes and the kindergarten scholarship at the woman's college. She pledged that her committee would work with the legislation committee to secure an increased appropriation for the state reform school at Marianna, and that it would work to get women appointed to school boards. She urged each club to work for better school buildings and playgrounds, and to endorse medical inspection and school hygiene programs.[40] May's vigorous approach to the committee's work surprised many of the clubwomen; they were used to more lethargic leadership. Elizabeth Hocker wrote her, "You certainly have revolutionized our Education department."[41] May's enthusiasm often had the desired effect and inspired her colleagues to take action. One such woman informed May that by herself she had inspected her local schools and had found "many faults." The writer also told May she was so interested

in the education work that she was unable to "control her tongue" whenever she saw something that needed improvement."[42] Another clubwomen wondered if the education department was also planning to work for women's suffrage, for she thought it would be a "super subject" for the committee to tackle.[43]

On March 28, 1912, May was in Gainesville to address the State Conference of Superintendents, Member's of School Boards, and High School Principals. Of the eighty-four speakers at the three-day conference, she was the only woman and the last on the agenda.[44] She told the educators what the Federation was doing to aid education, called for better teacher training, higher salaries, longer school terms, smaller classes, uniform textbooks, school libraries and playgrounds, compulsory education, and women serving on school boards. She described the tomato and corn clubs and urged cooperation. She also urged the men to back improvements at the Marianna reform school. She was given a standing ovation, and presented with a bouquet of flowers, and was escorted from the dais by William Sheats.

When the 1913 Legislative session convened May and other clubwomen were ready for it. The memorial they submitted was no timid document; it included a list of fifteen demands which the women wanted the legislators to act upon. The women called for amendments to strengthen the 1911 juvenile court law; a $25,000 per annum appropriation for the reform school; creation of a state board of charities;

enactment of a comprehensive child labor bill; a prohibition against newspapers printing gory details of murders, executions, and suicides; establishment of a hospital for the feeble-minded; a law prohibiting placement of advertising signs on trees, telephone poles, fences, and other structures along public highways; a bill allowing women to be elected to school boards; a law giving women the right to enter into contracts relating to their own property; a law making wife and child desertion a felony; and one which would establish certification of nurses.[45]

May and her colleagues worked closely with the Florida Child Labor Committee, a new organization which had been organized to promote child labor legislation. It was headed by John W. Stagg of Orlando, Marcus Fagg of Jacksonville, and Mary E. Randall of Lawtey, a Federation member and close friend of May's. This committee and the clubwomen organized "parlour meetings" to promote their legislation.[46] They sponsored exhibits and lantern slide shows to educated the public about the issues. And while the legislature was in session they mounted an active letter writing campaign. In addition, Julia Lathrop of the National Children's Bureau in Washington was brought to Florida for a series of lectures. Ion Farris and St. Elmo Acosta of the Duval delegation introduced and guided the child labor bill through the legislature. May knew both men well. Acosta had been one of the councilmen who had accompanied her on the publicized

inspection tour of the Jacksonville jail. Mrs. Farris was a clubwoman. Mrs. Frank E. Jennings, head of the Federation's legislation committee, led the women's lobbying effort in Tallahassee. May, also spent time there. She sent copies of the Federation's memorial to the state's five major newspapers, and upon publication she personally distributed copies of the papers to each member of the legislature. Fagg and his associates also worked at the capitol. When the session was over many goals had been achieved.

The 1913 legislature voted a sizeable appropriation of $65,000 for two years for the reform school and reorganized the facility, fired the management, and renamed the place the Florida Industrial School for Boys. The legislature also passed the most comprehensive child labor law that had ever been enacted in the state, a wife and child desertion bill, and a measure authorizing women to serve as county probation officers. It also enacted laws regulating the certification of nurses, strengthening of the state's pure food and drug law, creating the office of rural school inspector, raising the standards leading to teacher certification, and authorizing special taxing districts to issue bonds for public education. In addition to these progressive measures it enacted conservation laws which established a game and fish commission and protected wild birds and animals, including the robin. To May's personal satisfaction the lawmakers appropriated $3,000 to

aid the corn and tomato clubs. It was a very impressive record, but, of course, May knew that there was more work to do. Women were still denied full property or legal rights, they could still not hold elective office in the state, and there was yet no compulsory education law.[47]

After the session May returned to her club and civic activities. With the help of Caroline Brevard of Tallahassee, she secured a United Daughters of the Confederacy scholarship for the Woman's College, to be awarded to the girl who was the runner-up in the Federation's kindergarten scholarship selection. In June Governor Trammell appointed May Florida's delegate to the seventeenth Child Welfare Conference of the Parents' and Teacher's Association held in Boston. Because of family obligations she could not go but gave her proxy to the secretary of the Florida Federation of Mother's Clubs, Mrs. Mary P. Brownell, who reported back to the education committee. Selected a delegate to the National Hygiene Congress in Buffalo a month later, May was again unable to go and this time she gave her proxy to the medical inspector of the Duval County schools.

On October 10, 1913, May spoke before the Duval County School Board at a public meeting which was called to discuss the creation of a taxing district and the issuance of school bonds. She cited figures, statistics, and laws to show that the money was direly needed and that the proposed tax district was the proper means by which to raise the funds.

Other activities transpired to make 1913 a busy year for May Jennings. She became a sponsor of Pi Beta Phi sorority at Stetson University, where her son was enrolled; and attended several of the sorority's functions. She joined a committee to promote the improvement of the Columbia College library in Lake City, and she worked for the Jacksonville Infant Welfare Society. She accompanied Elizabeth Hocker to Washington, D.C., to attend a General Federation board meeting and the convention of the National Council for Social Centers. She wrote an article on education for a special woman's issue of the Miami Herald.[48] She helped push a resolution through the Jacksonville city council regulating midwifery in the city. With the help of the Jacksonville Equal Franchise League, she worked to get a Sunday "blue law" passed by the council. A modified law was adopted. She organized the Jacksonville Woman's Club "legislation day" and then in December she and her husband boxed and sent crates of oranges from their private groves to President Woodrow Wilson and all the members of his cabinet.

It was also a year of trials and sorrow for the family. The Brooksville property demanded much of May's time. A large pecan orchard and strawberry patch had to be managed. Her brother's alcoholism worsened during the year and precipitated several crises, and her brother-in-law, Charles Jennings, took ill and died at the Jennings home

in November. Perhaps she yearned, like her friend Lena Shackleford, "for the good old Brooksville days when they lived the simple life."[49] But May never had time to look back; she was too busy making plans for the new year.

The whole of 1914 was a whirlwind of activity. The pace May set for herself was terrific. In January she secured the woman's club's building for a lecture and slide show, which was presented by Dr. Eugene Swope, field agent of the Florida Audubon Society. That same month she met with Mrs. Frank E. Jennings and her legislation committee to discuss the new year. The legislature would not be in session, but both agreed that there was much publicity work and friendly preparatory lobbying which could be done. May Jennings and Minerva Jennings, while rivals, respected each other's opinions and abilities and cooperated with one another for the good of the Federation.

In February May attended the third annual Conference of Florida Charities and Corrections in Gainesville. Marcus Fagg was then secretary of the organization. She also attended that month the first annual meeting of the Jacksonville Infant Welfare Society and journeyed to Tallahassee for a Federation board meeting and to confer with Miss Harris. Later she led a discussion at the Jacksonville Woman's Club on practical politics.[50] She travled to Deland for a Pi Phi social function.

Even with her travels, conventions, and speaking engagements May maintained a volumnious correspondence. She had become the defacto president of the Federation because Mrs. Hocker did not like to travel and was not as good a public speaker. May began to attend to the organization's many needs. Scores of letters arrived almost daily, seeking advice on how to form a woman's club, how to become a member of the Federation, how to set up an education committee, how to present a public meeting, and so on. It was more than one woman could handle and she had to employ a stenographer to help out. She paid the woman's wages and the Federation furnished supplies and postage.

May received many requests to speak and appear at club functions. Most of these invitations had to be rejected; there was just not enough time to do everything. While all correspondence was conscientiously answered, May selected her personal appearances carefully. Only the more important functions were attended, although she tried to visit as many clubs as possible as she traveled around the state.

In March 1914, May spoke for the second time before the convention of superintendents and leading Florida educators. The meeting was held in Fort Myers. Mrs. Edna Fuller of Orlando, chairman of the Federation's civics department, also was on the program. May called for cooperation between the Federation and state educators.

She outlined the work of the Federation's education department, described the women's hopes for the coming years, and put the men on notice that it was time to "agitate forcefully for a compulsory education law."[51] While in Fort Myers she was feted by the local woman's club and toured Thomas Edison's winter home.

Upon her return to Jacksonville May continued her busy schedule. She helped Marcus Fagg conduct the Children's Home Society's annual Re-Union Week, and invited Marie Randall of Lawtey, chairman of the Federation's social conditions department, to speak before Jacksonville clubwomen. Later in the month she met with Jacksonville probation officials about the local juvenile delinquency problems and she presented a petition, to retain the city's school nurses, to the school board. The nurses were retained. Finally, she wrote all Federation clubs urging them to wire their Congressmen in support of the Smith-Lever Agricultural Extension bill which was mired in the Congress.

In June, 1914, May attended her first General Federation convention. It was held in Chicago and she enjoyed it immensely, especially meeting intelligent, hard-working women like herself who were committed to progressive change. She heard addresses by Jane Addams, of Hull House fame, and by Carrie Chapman Catts, the feminist.[52] After the convention the Jennings took a brief holiday in North Carolina. Upon returning to Jacksonville May received

a telegram summoning her to Bar Harbor, Maine, where her father, Austin Mann, was gravely ill. He died shortly after her arrival. The funeral was held at the Jennings' home and interment was in Evergreen Cemetery. Hundreds of prominent people from around the state attended the services.

May bore her loss with dignity and fortitude, but she missed her papa terribly, for the two had remained very close to the end. By the middle of October, however, she was again deep into clubwork. The twentieth annual Federation convention was only a month away, and she was busy preparing a canning demonstration and an education exhibit for the delegates. The 1914 convention, which was held at Lakeland, was a watermark event. The Florida Federation of Women's Clubs was now almost twenty years old. It was a mature and viable organization; few officials failed to recognize its political strength. Scores of women's clubs from around the state now belonged to the organization, though there were still a few maverick holdouts in the panhandle.

The convention convened on Tuesday, November 19, in the Lakeland civic auditorium. The women filled the hotels and overflowed into private homes. Receptions were held in the Kibler Hotel. Many delegates displayed the green and gold ribbons of the Federation. The women were reminded that no hats were to be worn in the auditorium so that everyone would have an unrestricted view of the proceedings.

After the usual welcomes and greetings by local officials, a piano concerto was performed by a clublady and Mrs. Hocker gave her farewell address.

Official business began the following day. Reports from seventy-two clubs described the achievements and successes all over Florida. May's report on the education department was fourteen typewritten pages long. There were also talks by William Sheats, Dr. J.Y. Porter, and Judge William H. Baker. Election of a new slate of officers occurred on the third and last day of the meeting. There was no doubt about who would be named president. May Jennings was the unanimous choice.

A cheer rose from the auditorium when it was announced that she had won the election. She gave a short speech and the delegates began immediately discussing their legislative program. There was a call for a compulsory education law, establishment of a state forestry board, a state board of charities, and a state bureau of vital statistics. Also desired was a girls' industrial training school, a state tuberculosis sanitorium, a school for the feeble-minded, a law allowing women to serve on school boards, and passage of a prohibition amendment. A banquet was held that night in the hotel. The mantle was passed. May took her pledge to fulfill her duties faithfully and to uphold the objectives of the Federation. She was now forty-two years old and the most politically powerful woman in the state; she knew what to do with that power.

Notes to Chapter VI

[1]The Woman's Club, Jacksonville, 1897-98, Yearbook, n.p. For a history of the club see Noble, Woman's Club of Jacksonville, Golden Jubilee Issue: 1897-1947 (Jacksonville, 1947).

[2]Ibid.

[3]Jacksonville Dixie, November 8, 1912.

[4]Blackman, The Women of Florida, I., p. 128.

[5]Sanford Herald, undated, quoted in biographical sketch of May Mann Jennings, 1919. MMJ Papers, Box 16.

[6]"Railroad Resolution," Jacksonville Woman's Club, July 1906. MMJ Papers, Box 3.

[7]Jacksonville Metropolis, July 24, 1906.

[8]Ibid., November 23, 1907.

[9]Janie Smith Rhyne, Our Yesterday (Marianna, Florida, 1968), n.p.

[10]Jacksonville clubwomen began work to secure a juvenile court system in the state in 1906. See Jacksonville Metropolis, November 15, 1906.

[11]"Memorial to the Legislature," April, 1907. MMJ Papers, Box 3.

[12]Laws of Florida, 1907, Chapter 5686, No. 91. The 1901 legislature had passed a child labor bill but it was weak and ineffective.

[13]"Resolution," Jacksonville Woman's Club, March 20, 1909. MMJ Papers, Box 3.

[14]Gilchrist, a bachelor, and his mother were frequent guests in the Jennings' Jacksonville home. At his inaugural ball Gilchrist danced the first dance with May Jennings. It was noted that she wore the same gown she had worn to her husband's inaugural ball. Jacksonville Metropolis, January 6, 1909.

[15]"Memorial on the Child Labor Law," Jacksonville Woman's Club. MMJ Papers, Box 3.

[16]Blackman, The Women of Florida, I, p. 139.

[17]Telegram. May Jennings to Mrs. Charles A. Cay [1911]. MMJ Papers, Box 3.

[18]Jacksonville Metropolis, November 22, 1907.

[19]Ibid., November 27, 1907.

[20]Ibid., February 10, 1908. Also see Paul S. George, "A Cyclone Hits Miami: Carrie Nation's Visit to the Wicked City," Florida Historical Quarterly, LVIII, October, 1979, pp. 150-159.

[21]Jacksonville Metropolis, December 19, 1908.

[22]Ibid., January 27, 1909.

[23]"Report of Jail Committee," May 22, 1911. MMJ Papers, Box 3.

[24]Jacksonville DAR (n.d.), n.p.

[25]Charter, Jacksonville Y.W.C.A., February 11, 1911. MMJ Papers, Box 3.

[26]May Jennings to W.S. Jennings, February 19, 1911. MMJ Papers, Box 3.

[27]Letty M. Fifield, History of Jacksonville Y.W.C.A. (Jacksonville, 1950), p. 17.

[28]Young Women's Christian Association, 1912-13, Yearbook (Jacksonville, n.d.); for short histories of the Jacksonville YWCA see Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, February 12, 1950, March 25, 1951.

[29]Speech, "Personal Service." MMJ Papers, Box 3.

[30]Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, December 13, 1912.

[31]Susan Wight to May Jennings [1913]. MMJ Papers, Box 3.

[32]Blackman, The Women of Florida, I, p. 141.

[33]Edna Fuller to May Jennings [1913]. MMJ Papers, Box 3; Lucretia Mote to May Jennings, May 15, 1913. MMJ Papers, Box 3.

[34]Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, March 1, 1913.

[35]Mother's Clubs, organized during the first decade of the twentieth-century, were the forerunners of Parent-Teacher Associations.

[36]Florida School Exponent, XVII, June, 1910, p. 12.

[37]The 1914 Smith-Lever Act made rural extension work one of the nation's domestic priorities.

[38]"Education Committee Report," F.F.W.C., February, 1913. MMJ Papers, Box 3.

[39]Agnes E. Harris to May Jennings, February 15, 1913. MMJ Papers, Box 3.

[40]"Education Committee Report," F.F.W.C. February, 1913. MMJ Papers, Box 3.

[41]Elizabeth Hocker to May Jennings, August 27, 1913. MMJ Papers, Box 3.

[42]Mary Brownell to May Jennings, October 19, 1913. MMJ Papers, Box 3.

[43]Katherine Boyles to May Jennings, December 6, 1913. MMJ Papers, Box 3.

[44]Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, March 30, 1913.

[45]"Memorial," Jacksonville Woman's Club, April, 1913. MMJ Papers, Box 3.

[46]Emily Howard Atkins, "The 1913 Campaign for Child Labor in Florida," Florida Historical Quarterly XXXVI, January, 1957.

[47]"Legislation Committee Report," Jacksonville Women's Club, May, 1913. MMJ Papers, Box 3.

[48]Miami Herald, August 7, 1913.

[49]Lena Shackleford to May Jennings, October 20, 1913. MMJ Papers, Box 3.

[50]Speech, "Practical Politics," February 12, 1914. MMJ Papers, Box 4.

[51]Speech before Florida Education Association annual convention, March 12, 1914. MMJ Papers, Box 4.

[52]Program, GFWC, Biennial Convention, Chicago, 1914. MMJ Papers, Box 4.

CHAPTER VII
MADAM PRESIDENT AND THE OLD-GIRL NETWORK

Under May Jennings' guidance the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs increased in numbers and in political strength. During her three year tenure fifty-nine new clubs joined the Federation, and its membership rose from 5,246 to 9,163. The Federation became one of the state's largest organizations. Its goals during May's first year as president were those that had been determined at the Lakeland convention. To this list was quietly added one other, which had been on the Federation's books since 1905. It was the conservation resolution which called for the preservation of a Royal Palm hammock on Paradise Key, an Everglades islet twelve miles southwest of Homestead in Dade County. As soon as May's election as president was confirmed, clubwomen from South Florida, who were attending the convention, approached her to urge her to revive the resolution and join them in an effort to save the endangered hammock. These women were led by Mary Barr Munroe, wife of the distinguished author Kirk Munroe, and by Edith Gifford, wife of John Gifford, former professor from Cornell University and a forestry expert who now lived in Coconut Grove.

The women spoke to May about the long forgotten and moribund Federation resolution to preserve the key. They

described the magnificent stand of Royal Palms and lush tropical vegetation which grew on the key, and told her about past efforts to preserve the hammock which had been undertaken by their husbands and other naturalists and scientists including H.P. Rolfs, forestry professor at the University of Florida; N.L. Britton, director of the New York Botanical Garden; Charles Simpson, operator of a private botanical garden in Dade County; Edward Simmonds, chief botanist for the agriculture department in Dade County; David Fairchild, who headed the United States Office of Foreign Seed and Plant Introduction in Coconut Grove; and James K. Small, curator of the New York Botanical Garden. Over the years each of these men had visited Paradise Key to admire and study its palms and vegetation, and since 1893 they had been trying to get the national government to preserve the hammock. Now in 1914 it was more imperative than ever that something be done, for the hammock was in danger of being destroyed. Surveyors and road crews were at that very moment mapping the area for future development. Flagler's Key West extension lay only a few miles east of the key, and a road from Homestead to Flamingo was in the planning stages.

May was captivated by what she heard from the women and was moved by their pleas for help. She had never visited the key, but she had always liked South Florida and was herself at that time drawing up plans for the construction of

a vacation home on the Jennings' property in Miami. She knew from her earlier travels with her husband to inspect the dredges and drainage canals that the area was beginning to be affected by the encroachment of modern society. She realized that the construction of roads into the interior would probably mean that much of the wild and serenely beautiful Everglades would be lost forever. Then and there, only hours after her election as president of the Federation, she decided to make the preservation of Paradise Key one of the main goals of her administration. Her decision was to have historic and far-reaching consequences for Florida and was to cause her to dedicate much of her life to the effort of saving the key and the surrounding Everglades. The decision launched her upon a political, economic, and public relations struggle which was to span thirty-three years. But, in 1914 the future lay far away, and May was confident that the Federation could save the key. She had no illusions, however, that the job would be easy.

Before May's tenure as Federation president reached an end, many of the organization's major goals would be achieved, for under her guidance the Federation would wield even greater effective political power. May Jennings was the type of bold, politically adroit leader that the organization needed. She was to make use of one of the Federation's most interesting and important characteristics, its unique old-girl network, a framework of statewide

friendships among the clubwomen, many of whom were related to the state's most powerful male business, political, and civic leaders. This network, which had been building in the Federation for nearly two decades, was used very effectively during May's administration. While it had always been present to some extent, it had not been used very much by past presidents. May could not ignore the Federation's most important and only real political weapon--its family and friendship connections. To outside observers the Federation was a seemingly weak organization composed of tea drinking, non-voting citizens who could not even hold public office or exercise much political leverage. But during May's tenure the Federation was to use the old-girl network to good advantage to gain access into the state's highest circles of power.

All that an aggressive and perceptive Federation president needed to make contact with a particular official or business leader was to call upon the Federation network. Through it one could gain entre into the governor's mansion, the legislature, the courts, state boards and commissions, county commissions, and town and village councils. Of course this entrance was achieved in an unorthodox and roundabout way, but it was effective, for no Federation tactic ever proved more potent than the one that reached the state's leaders through their families. Arguments and persuasions which came from female relatives--mothers, wives,

and daughters--often proved irresistible. Understandably the men might be more receptive to the urgings of their own women folk than to demands coming from nameless numbers of clubwomen. The personal approach inherent in the old-girl network proved critical to the Federation's success. If the men could not believe and respect the opinions and desires of their own wives, daughters, mothers, and sisters, who were Federation members, then who could they believe? At times, even the southern "cult of womanhood" worked in the Federation's favor, for because of it the men were disposed to give the women respectful, if gruding, audiences. But, it was the old-girl network that really aided the Federation and which May relied upon the most often to gain "the ear" of Florida officials and politicians.

Of course, not every male in government said yes to the women in his family, whether or not they happened to be Federation members. Most remained stolid and unsympathetic to the women's goals, but enough of them were softened by the approaches of their female relatives to make a real difference. On many occasions it was these first family contacts which smoothed the way for May ahd her officers and allowed them to present the Federation's case or do its lobbying work. The use of the network was not a rigid or elaborate scheme used by the women to trick the men into acquiescing. There was nothing sinister about it. It was the natural, logical, and undevious use of a political tool

which was obvious for the women. The charge of using "womanly wiles" on such a grand scale to gain support for Federation goals cannot be sustained, but the accusation that the women used all of their family connections to reach the right people and further their cause is true. Men had always used an old-boy network; indeed, politics sometimes seemed to be no more than a system based entirely upon friendships, contacts, and loyalties. Thus, the women were using something which had finally become available to them as it had been for so long to the men.

The well-placed family connections that the old-girl network brought to the Federation were impressive and could not be denied. During her three year tenure as Federation president May called upon the services of perhaps 100 of the organization's most prominent members, each of whom was wife, mother, or daughter of a governor, legislator, supreme court justice, congressman, state official, judge, journalist, university president, businessman, pioneer developer, or local official. For instance, those who served on the Federation's all-important legislation committee during May's administration included Mary Wright Drane (Lakeland), wife of Herbert J. Drane, former member of the state House and a state Senator during the 1913 and 1915 sessions; Allie Farris (Jacksonville), wife of Ion L. Farris, ex-speaker of the House and member of the Senate during the 1915 and 1917 sessions; Ella Burford (Ocala), wife of Robert A. Burford,

former member of the House and a Marion County official; Dycie Sweger (Live Oak), wife of Roy L. Sweger, who edited the Gadsen County Times and later served in both the Florida House and the Senate; Lena Shackleford, wife of Thomas Shackleford, who served on the supreme court from 1902 until 1917; Ruby Whitfield (Tallahassee), wife of C. Talbot Whitfield, private secretary to Governors Gilchrist and Trammell; Minerva Jennings (Jacksonville), wife of Frank E. Jennings, member of the State Board of Control and later a member of the House; Margaret Young (Jacksonville), wife of William B. Young, the state's judge advocate general and later a House member; Jessie Hilburn (Palatka), wife of Samuel Hilburn who served in the 1908 House and the 1911 Senate; Bell Rood (New Smyrna), wife of Henry Rood, owner of the New Smyrna News; Rose Wilson (Sarasota), wife of C. V. Wilson, former member of the 1903, 1905, and 1907 House and owner of the Sarasota Times; Maggie Davis (Perry), wife of William B. Davis, Taylor County judge; Ida Dunn (Tallahassee), wife of Royal C. Dunn, state railroad commissioner; Lina L'Engle Barnett (Jacksonville), wife of Bion H. Barnett, founder of the Barnett banking empire; Catherine Phillips (Jacksonville), wife of Henry B. Phillips, circuit judge of Duval County; Eugenia Roberts (Key West), wife of E. O. Roberts, ex-House member and Monroe County state attorney; Ninah Cummer (Jacksonville), wife of Arthur G. Cummer, co-owner of the state's largest lumber mill and naval stores company; Frances Anderson (Jacksonville), activist,

and daughter of prominent attorney Herbert L. Anderson; and Antoinette Frederick (Miami), widow of that city's first civil engineer, attorney, and land developer, John S. Frederick.

During May's tenure nearly all of the Federation's committees had members whose family connections were prominent. Her major officers and board of directors included: Mary Sorenson Moore (Miami), wife of T. Vivian Moore, developer, ex-legislator, and South Florida's "pineapple king"; Florence Cay (Tallahassee), wife of Charles A. Cay, Leon County legislator and civic leader ("Flo" Cay, a confidant of May's, ran a boarding house favored by legislators and was therefore able to keep abreast of the public and not so public happenings at the Capitol); Ora Minium (Jacksonville), wife of Harry B. Minium, member of the State Board of Control; Kate V. Jackson (Tampa), daughter of John Jackson , one of the founders of that city; Elizabeth Hocker (Ocala), daughter-in-law of William Hocker, state supreme court justice from 1903 to 1915; Ella Brown (Green Cove Springs), wife of T.J. Brown, ex-legislator and civic leader; and Lucy Wamboldt (Jacksonville), wife of Nelson C. Wamboldt, city councilman.

Dollie Hendley (Dade City), wife of Jefferson A. Hendley, Pasco County pioneer and former legislator, served on the Federation's civics committee, as did Mrs. John E. Avery (Pensacola), who was married to a member of the

House. The Federation press, i.e. publicity, committee was equally well-staffed. It included Nelle Worthington (Tampa), who was married to Justin E. Worthington, editor of the Tampa Times; and Majory Stoneman Douglas (Miami), whose father was editor and co-owner of the Miami Herald.

Conservation was one of the Federation's largest and most active committees, and it was concerned with bird protection, forestry, waterways, good roads, and Seminole Indians. The well-connected women who served on this committee included Julia Hanson (Fort Myers), wife of a pioneer doctor and mother of a state bird warden and Seminole Indian agent; Mrs. James Paul (High Springs), whose husband served in the 1915 House; Edith Gifford (Coconut Grove), wife of John Gifford, author and forestry expert; Maria Ingraham (St. Augustine), wife of James E. Ingraham, president of Flager's Model Land Company; Mary Barr Munroe (Coconut Grove), authoress and wife of Kirk Munroe; Elizabeth McDonald (Stuart), wife of Jackson McDonald, mayor of his town; Ethelyn Overstreet (Orlando), wife of Moses Overstreet, banker and future state senator; Mrs. W.J. Tweedell (Homestead), wife of a Dade County Commissioner; Ivy Stranahan (Fort Lauderdale), whose husband, Frank Stranahan, was a pioneer developer and Seminole Indian trader; Minnie Moore Willson (Kissimmee), whose husband James Willson, was president of the Florida Waterway Association and a co-founder, along with her, of the Friends of Florida

Seminoles organization; Ella Dimick (Palm Beach), who was married to Captain Elisha N. Dimick, former House and Senate member and a pioneer banker and developer; Eugenia Davis (Tallahassee), whose husband, George I. Davis, had played a prominent role at the 1885 Constitution Convention and was Leon County's postmaster; and, finally, Jane Fisher (Miami), wife of Carl G. Fisher, entrepreneur and developer of Miami Beach.

The Federation's education committee was composed of Sudie B. Wright (Lakeland), whose husband, George Wright, had founded Wright Coffee Importing Company; Mrs. T.J. McBeath (Jasper), whose husband was past editor of the Florida School Exponent; Allison Locke (Jacksonville), daughter of Judge James W. Locke, of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals; Mrs. Walter Corbett (Jacksonville), whose husband headed Prudential Insurance Company; and Virginia Darby Trammell (Lakeland-Tallahassee), wife of Park Trammell, the governor of Florida.

Iva Sproule-Baker (Miami), who with her husband owned a prominent music academy, served on the Federation's music committee, along with Lucretia Mote (Leesburg), a graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music, and wife of E.H. Mote, ex-legislator and central Florida citrus tycoon. The public health committee contained three female medical doctors, Dr. Ellen Lowell Stevens (Jacksonville), Dr. Grace Whitford (Ozona), and Dr. Sarah E. Wheeler

(Lakeland), and one woman dentist, Dr. Emma Dickinson (Orange City). The Federation's home economics committee was served by Pattie Monroe (Miami), wife of A. Leight Monroe, prominent doctor and civic leader; Mrs. W.T. Gary (Ocala), whose husband served in the state Senate; Agnes Ellen Harris (Tallahassee) dean of the home economics department at Florida State College for Women; and by Mrs. A.W. Young (Vero), whose husband had served in both the state House and Senate.

May also felt free to call upon Lucy Blackman (Winter Park), wife of William F. Blackman, president of Rollins College; Katherine B. Tippetts (St. Petersburg), owner of the Belmont Hotel and a well-known authoress; Annie Broward (Jacksonville), wife of former governor Napoleon Bonaparte Broward and now head of a large tugboat company; Soledad Safford (Tarpon Springs), widow of the former governor of Arizona; Dorothy Conradi (Tallahassee), wife of Edward Conradi, president of the Florida State College for Women; Lula Paine Fletcher (Jacksonville), wife of United States Senator Duncan U. Fletcher; Eloise Hulley (Deland), wife of Lincoln Hulley), president of Stetson University; Elizabeth Skinner (Dunedin), daughter of Lee Skinner, west coast pioneer and owner of the state's largest citrus grove; Edna Fuller (Orlando), who was to become Florida's first female legislator; and Halle Warlow (Orlando), wife of Picton Warlow, judge of the Orange County criminal court.

The old-girl network presented a formidable and powerful pressure group. In addition to the core of the network there were hundreds of Federation rank and file members who were related to local businessmen, bankers, political leaders, and city and county officials. Thus if one examines the network as just outlined one can better understand its potency for among the women's families are one sitting governor, three ex-governors, one United States Senator, nineteen state legislators, six prominent journalists, two state supreme court justices, one state railroad commissioner, two members of the state Board of Control, three state judges, a private secretary to two governors, three college presidents, and a host of prominent businessmen, bankers, and civic leaders. The network was indeed a part of Florida's establishment. It is easy to see why the Federation could get many things accomplished.

As soon as May returned to Jacksonville from the Lakeland meeting that had elected her president of the Federation she began her work. Her first use of the Federation's old-girl network was on behalf of Paradise Key. The women from South Florida had notified her that Flagler's widow Mary Kenan Flagler, had offered to donate 960 acres of Paradise Key and surrounding land to help preserve the hammock. News of this offer had been relayed by James Ingraham to Kirk Munroe, and hence to Mary Munroe, an avid conservationist and bird lover. May immediately

recognized the significance of this offer and developed a plan for the Federation to save the hammock. She felt that with the Flagler gift the state might also be willing to donate the remaining land for a park provided it would not have to assume maintenance of it. Could the Federation maintain and operate a public park? It was a bold idea.

In early December, 1914, May wrote a letter to Federation officers describing the hammock, setting forth her plan to develop it as a park, and asking for opinions. If they approved she wanted them to accompany her to Tallahassee to speak to Governor Trammell and other state officials. She knew she would need the support of the Federation's officers. Many agreed that preservation of the hammock would be a fine civic gesture, but several of the women questioned the feasibility of the Federation alone assuming such a financial burden.[1] This kind of opposition was to crop up several years hence and seriously jeopardize the project. Fortunately, the doubters were in the minority, and May proceeded with her plans, including a request for a $1,000 annual state appropriation for the park. When no one volunteered to accompany her to Tallahassee, she went alone. The old-girl network smoothed her way, however. Florence Cay telephoned Virginia Trammell to, as Mrs. Cay described it, "touch upon the subject of the hammock."[2] Mrs. Trammell was cautious but encouraging and said she would speak to the governor. This was just

the first of many instances where May would make use of the Federation's network to assess attitudes and contact important people.

May proceeded with her visit to Tallahassee. She also scheduled a trip to South Florida to see the hammock for herself. As Rose Lewis, of Fort Pierce and a Federation vice-president, remarked, the new president "did set a terrific pace."[3] During the second week in December May journeyed by train to Tallahassee where she apparently stayed with the Trammells in the governor's residence. A Tallahassee paper reported: "Mrs. William S. Jennings, the brilliant wife of former Governor Jennings . . . is making a brief visit to the Capitol city, and is being charmingly entertained at the Governor's Mansion by Mrs. Park Trammell."[4] While in the city May also met with Agnes Harris at the Women's College to discuss home economics and the extension work the Federation was sponsoring. Few, however, knew of the real purpose for the visit. Florence Cay accompanied May when she met with the various cabinet members who were all trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund. Trammell must have been won over, for he promised to present the Federation's request at the next meeting of the trustees. On December 23, the trustees approved a letter addressed to the Dade County commission, authorizing it to take action to prevent trespassing on the hammock land owned by the state.

Mr. W.J. Tweedell, one of the Commissioners, had a wife who was a prominent clubwoman in Homestead and a friend of May's.

The following day, the trustees voted to grant tentatively the Federation park request, subject to legislative approval. The trustees planned to visit South Florida in January, and May, who was apprised of their action, was asked not to reveal the news to the public until after that time. Elated over the officials' action, she celebrated a joyous Christmas. In fact, the trustees did not need legislative approval to grant and convey the land, but perhaps the unusual nature of the Federation's request made them more cautious than usual. Endorsement by the governor or the trustees was no guarantee that the lawmakers would give their approval. Only intense lobbying efforts would ensure success.

The day after Christmas the Jennings family traveled to Miami for a round of official Federation visits. Much time was taken up with routine club business, but on Monday, December 28, accompanied by her husband and son and Mrs. T.V. Moore, Mrs. A. Leight Monroe, and Mary Barr Munroe, May journeyed to Paradise Key to see for herself the much talked-about Royal Palm hammock. The trip must have been a "bone-jarring" one, since the road out to the key was unpaved and little more than a boggy cow path, barely passable by auto during the wet season. Pictures of the region

during that period often show a stranded Model-T hub-high in mud with the occupants digging and pushing to get it unstuck. In a letter to Elizabeth Hocker, May referred to the trip: "The Hammock is entirely surrounded by water, the palms tower much above the other growth. . . . The women down in that part of the country are very enthusiastic over the Park subject."[5]

After the trustees visited the key they notified May that they approved of the resolution granting the property to the Federation, and then the news was released to the public. It was an important event in the history of Florida conservation because with this action state government was changing, quietly but dramatically, its policy. No matter that the trustees grudgingly approved, or that they were reluctant to assume any of the care of the proposed park, or that, as some said, the only reason they concurred was because the land was unfit for anything else. The decision was ultimately to benefit all of the people, and the hammock would become Florida's first state park, albeit privately owned. The park would be an important step in the establishment of the Everglades National Park many years hence.

After May received notification of the approval of the trustees she began mobilizing the Federation. Her husband drafted a bill to be presented to the legislature, calling for the state to deed to the Federation 960 acres

to match the 960-acre Flagler grant. It would also provide $1,000 for maintenance of the park. May and her cohorts knew that there was much to be done. The public had to be rallied in support of the project; legislators needed to be contacted; pamphlets and other material about the proposed park would have to be printed; speeches had to be given, and press releases written. There was little available time as the legislature convened in only two months.

In addition to the park projects May had many other Federation business matters to attend to. The volume of her correspondence continued to grow; she was the leader of an organization with twenty departments, ninety-one clubs, and 6,000 members. She employed a second parttime stenographer to help not only with her Federation correspondence but also that relating to her duties as president of the Springfield Improvement Association, and of the DAR and the YWCA. She had also been appointed state chairman of the Belgium Relief Commission with the responsibility of raising money and goods for war-stricken European refugees. May labored tirelessly to promote the club movement and to bring even more women into civic work. She wanted the women of Florida to become better educated in practical politics and civic service. She wrote a paper about the Federation and its work and her views and feelings about women's clubs and mailed a copy to each unaffiliated club in the state.[6]

During this period she also supervised a statewide campaign to register births which the Federation had instituted to alert the public to the need for a bureau of vital statistics. The actual work was done under the auspices of Julia Lathrop, director of the Children's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor. May also corresponded with William Sheats, state superintendent of public instruction, about education bills to be submitted to the upcoming legislature. Sheats favored a county-option compulsory education bill, while May wanted a stronger law that would compel attendance. She was also working with a Federation committee on plans to present to state officials on the rebuilding of the Industrial School for Boys at Marianna, which had just suffered a major fire. The women favored construction of a new facility based on the family-style cottage plan. In addition to all of these matters, May was working with Agnes Harris, home economist, to prevent state officials from usurping all the funds that the state was receiving from the federal Smith-Lever Act. In one nearby state the local land-grant college had already announced that only twenty-four per cent of the money would be allotted to female educational needs, despite the fact that fifty per cent was designated by law for extension work among rural farm women. Florida women had received only $2,000 of a $10,000 federal grant. As a prominent and able speaker May received many requests to lecture before

clubs and organization. She did not have time to accept all these invitations, but she planned several tours throughout the state which would enable her to visit many clubs.

May Jennings thrived on work and activity. She enjoyed what she was doing, and took pride in knowing that her work was vital to the welfare of her state. She received encouraging support from hundreds of her sister clubwomen and this strengthened her determination to achieve her goals. Humor also helped to alleviate her burdens; she never lost the ability to laugh at herself or with her club friends. One lady, upon being appointed to the newly-established Federation good roads committee, wrote May, "I want to congratulate you on your brilliant choice. As a Good Roads builder I feel that I shall be an unqualified success. If I am not it won't be for lack of practice for I am just now engaged in corduroying the road in front of my place as my sleeping and waking dreams are disturbed by the racing of motors trying to pull out of the deep mud holes. I can see where the County commissioners of my area will have a bad fifteen minutes if they meet up with me."[7] That was the kind of dedication and determination May liked to hear.

May was called upon often to solve domestic problems since many of her colleagues were still not able to pursue club work without opposition from their families. When one woman wrote May that her husband was demanding that she stop her club work, she was told, "I do not think a man has

any right to ask a woman to stay home and do everything for him. It takes a great deal of conceit to imagine he is so complete that he can satisfy anybody all in himself. . . . I am not going to give you up without a struggle, husband or no. . . . I am very belligerent just now."[8]

As soon as news of the proposed Royal Palm Park was released to the public May began to enlist support for the project. She tried to get Washington to declare the hammock a national bird and wildlife sanctuary, but was unsuccessful in her effort. As the time for the legislative session approached, she and her officers worked diligently to finalize the Federation's 1915 legislative program. She was confident and optimistic about successfully getting the entire program enacted. She wrote a friend, "I am very hopeful that we shall succeed in getting many things through the Legislature for there are a great many clubwomen who are wives of legislators, who will be on the ground in Tallahassee to keep in close touch with our bills."[9] The new chairman of the legislation committee, Jessie McGriff (Mrs. John McGriff of Jacksonville), planned to spend the first weeks of the session in Tallahassee directing the Federation's lobbying efforts. May, who had a Federation speking tour planned was to go to the Capitol only after Mrs. McGriff returned home. Hindsight would show that her time would have been better spent if she had cancelled the tour and gone directly to Tallahassee.

When the Federation legislative resolution was approved copies were sent to the governor, the cabinet, and all members of the legislature, including Cary Hardee, speaker of the House (whose wife was a clubwoman), and A.E. Davis, president of the Senate. The Federation resolution called for the land grant to establish the park, enactment of a compulsory education bill, creation of a girls' industrial school, rebuilding of the boys' school at Marianna, erection of a state tuberculosis hospital, establishment of a forestry board, a bureau of vital statistics, and a board of charities, land for the Seminoles, development of roads, and a law allowing women to serve on school boards. It was a formidable shopping list.

Assured that all was proceeding without problems, May departed on her speaking tour. The Federation board of directors held a meeting at Dade City during that time. At the meeting the women were invited to St. Leo Abbey and College where they were entertained by Abbot Charles Mohr. One amusing bit of correspondence preceded this meeting. May was informed that only the Abbot could get the women into the college's buildings. "Who," May asked in jest, "could get them out?" The reply came, "that after the women saw the Abbot none would want out."[10] The handsome Abbot proved to be a charming host and served luncheon to the clubwomen, then he personally conducted the ladies "through the buildings where they had the privilege of

viewing the beautiful vestments and symbols and received special prayers in the chapel."[11] May, who shared her St. Joseph school days adventures with Abbot Mohr, corresponded with him for many years.

Unfortunately, all was not going well at Tallahassee. Jessie McGriff, who was inexperienced at legislative work, edited the Federation's resolution, and deleted the request for a $1,000 annual park appropriation. The sum for the girls' industrial school was also reduced, and a new demand for free textbooks was inserted. In addition, Minnie Moore Willson, a long-time champion of the Seminoles, arrived at the Capitol to lobby for the Indian land grant. Outspoken and abrasive, she generated resentment among the legislators by threatening reprisals if the bill was not enacted and thereby did much damage to the Federation's cause. May was furious when she was apprised of these actions. Mrs. McGriff, who was lukewarm to the park project, seemed unaware of the trouble that had been created, but the lawmakers were already balking at granting the park land, or the Seminole grant. Many felt that the Paradise Key acreage was not good for anything, especially a park.

May wrote chairman McGriff, "If the park tract is so dense and useless, I do not see why the men are so anxious to keep it if we are anxious to have it."[12] A letter from Lena Shackleford written about the woes of lobbying reached May at Dade City and added to her alarm. Mrs. Shackleford

wrote, "I will be glad to see you back over here, perhaps you can do something . . . they [the legislators] all look so kind and promising when we talk to them and then turn away and forget that we were ever there."[13] With no alternative May had to go to Tallahassee. Fences had to be mended and the credibility of the Federation reestablished.

May's trip to the Capitol appeared successful for the $1,000 for the park was put back into the bill. She lobbied Senator Glen Terrell and others on behalf of the boys' and girls' schools, and she pushed the education, Indian, and vital statistics bills before the appropriate legislative committees. She was assured that the measures would pass without further trouble, but, unfortunately, this was not so. As soon as she departed Tallahassee the park bill again ran into trouble. Several of the other bills were killed outright in committee. May would not give up, however. She felt personally responsible for the park proposal. During the last days of the session, when the outcome seemed dismal, Governor Jennings and son Bryan, who had just graduated from Stetson University, traveled to Tallahassee to lobby for the bill. Not only was it a race against the close of the session, but because of the publicity, vandals and road crews were digging up many of the palms and other exotic plants.

The legislature was scheduled to recess June 4, 1915; it would not meet again for two years. Time was crucial.

May had planned to be in the Capitol up to the last moment working for the bill, but illness, brought on by severe exhaustion, kept her at home in Jacksonville. As she anxiously awaited the outcome, her husband and son remained at the Capitol to push the measure. Finally on June 2nd she received a telegram from Bryan: "House passed Park Bill." The next day her husband wired: "Park Bill passed Senate midnight."[14] The bill had literally been enacted at the very last minute, but no matter, for Royal Palm Park was now more than just a vision.

May was overjoyed; the Federation owned the hammock. Unfortunately, she soon learned that the appropriation had been cut out of the bill by its opponents. Without maintenance, for all practical purposes, the park was doomed. How was the Federation to develop a state park for public purposes with no funding? May, both grateful yet frustrated, sent letters of appreciation to Herbert Drane and Harry Goldstein, sponsors of the bill, and to all the others who had voted for the park as well as other Federation legislation. Trying to boost everyone's morale, May notified Federation officers that the paths, lodge, and pavilions envisioned for the park could still be built. The Federation would just have to secure the funds somewhere else. In truth, May had no idea where the money would come from, but the importance of the project and her inherent optimism sustained her.

Despite the disappointments, it had been a successful legislative session for the Federation. The boys' industrial school had received adequate funding and a new cottage plan was adopted for its campus. A girls' industrial school had been created, though it was not well funded and there was talk of locating it at an old Marion County prison farm. A county option compulsory education bill was passed. Several laws promoting good roads were enacted including one which created the state's first road department. A state bureau of vital statistics was established, and detention homes for delinquent children were mandated for each county. However, there were failures also. There was still no forestry board, state tuberculosis hospital, lands for Seminoles, or a law allowing females to serve on school boards. But, in general, May was satisfied with the outcome of the session.

By 1915 the drive for equal suffrage for women was beginning to develop in Florida, although the state was never to play a major role in the national suffragette movement. In 1915 there were several women's rights organizations operating in the state. The first had been organized in Jacksonville in 1912 by friends of May's, many of whom were Federation members. This organization, known as the Florida Equal Franchise League, affiliated itself with the National American Woman's Suffrage Association. Other

groups soon organized and eventually most of the Florida leagues united into the Florida Equal Suffrage Association.[15]

Prior to 1918 membership in the various suffrage leagues in Florida read like a who's who of the Federation rolls. Dr. Mary Jewett, Mary Bryan (Mrs. William Jennings Bryan), Annie Broward, and Ivy Stranahan, all took turns guiding the Florida Equal Suffrage Association. Membership between the various town and city suffrage leagues and the Federation became so entwined that in most cases they were one and the same. On more than one occasion the Federation and the Florida Equal Suffrage Association shared the place and date of their yearly conventions, so that the state's clubwomen could conveniently attend both meetings without economic hardship.

May was especially sympathetic to the goals of the suffragists, although as president of the Federation she felt she could make no public endorsement of something which had not been officially approved by the membership. On several occasions she was urged to "go public" and support the movement. Edith Stoner, officer of the Southern States' Woman's Suffrage Conference, wrote, "You are the one woman in Florida who can carry your state for suffrage."[16] Mary Jewett, Federation member from Orlando and friend of Dr. Anna Shaw, national leader of the National American Woman's Suffrage Association, also urged May to take a stand. May did escort Dr. Shaw around Jacksonville when the leader

arrived in the city for a public lecture, but she felt tied by the views of the rank and file of the Federation who were opposed to becoming involved in such a controversial subject as equal suffrage. However, she determined that it was time to change those views and she believed the Federation should endorse suffrage. She began to work to those ends. After the 1915 legislative session adjourned work on the Federation's other objectives continued. South Florida women managed to get the Dade County Commissioners to name the new highway to Flamingo in honor of J.E. Ingraham, who had helped to secure the park land from the legislature and the Flagler estate. The Federation's civics department sponsored a statewide cleanup campaign to urge cities to beautify their parks, public facilities, and roadways. Beautification programs had a long and popular history within the Federation, and it was a logical step for the women to take an interest in highway beautification, especially since the state was in the beginnings of a "good roads" boom. A special Federation committee began making plans to beaufity the Dixie Highway which was being built from Chicago to Miami. Its route in Florida went from Thomasville, Georgia, to Tallahassee, then to Jacksonville, and from there down the east coast to Maimi. The Federation took on the responsibility for the last seventy-eight miles of the road that ran from Miami, through the park. Governor Jennings, a member of the Dixie Highway Commission,

and Carl Fisher, whose wife, Jane, was a Federation member, were the highway's chief promoters. The Federation later sponsored statewide anti-litter and anti-billboard campaigns. The Federation sponsored other projects during 1915, including the funding of a bed for an indigent patient at Dr. Hiram Byrd's private tuberculosis sanitorium in South Florida, and the travels and lectures of a home economics demonstration agent from Stetson University.

Most of May's time was occupied with the park project. Besides money, she needed public support. To secure funds she wrote every newspaper, organization, and individual that might be interested in helping the Federation. Philanthropists such as John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, and Charles Deering were solicited. Thomas A. Edison, a winter resident of Fort Myers, who May had met, sent $50.00. Gradually, small amounts of money began to trickle into the park fund, but it was never enough. Mrs. Flagler's 960-acre endowment was secured, and some of the land was rented out to area farmers. This earned several hundred dollars.

During 1915 May took no vacation. In July she spoke before the State Board of Control on behalf of the Smith-Lever funds and the girls' industrial school. In August she held a Federation board meeting at Fort Lauderdale. By September she was back on the club circuit. One friend wrote her, "Your energy is colossal, surpassed only by your

ability."[17] To lighten her burdens Governor Jennings surprised her in September with a new Welch automobile that he purchased while on a business trip to New York City. May was thrilled and wrote to a friend, "The president is going to ride in style from now on, if she has sense enough to run the machine."[18] Alas, there was never time to learn to drive the new automobile even though her son tried to give her lessons each time he was home from law school. It was many years before May Jennings learned to drive. Her immediate transportation dilemma was solved when, Benny, the Jennings' houseman and gardener, learned to drive and became May's chauffeur. On long trips she continued to travel by train.

The twenty-first annual Federation convention was held at Deland in November 1915. It marked May's first year as president of the organization. Over 100 clubwomen attended. Among those on the program were J.L. Boone, superintendent of the Boys' Industrial School, Dr. H.W. Cox, professor of psychology at the University of Florida who spoke about industrial education, and L.C. Spencer, United States Indian Agent to the Seminole Indians. May's address to the convention traced the history of womens' struggles. It was filled with platitudes like "Divine Plan," "great scheme of life," and "Eternal Ideal."[19] It was not one of her better speeches, but she received a standing ovation from an appreciative audience. Her official report noted

that during the year she had visited each of the state's five club sections, held five board of directors meetings, talked before 101 clubs, had written 1,869 letters, and had traveled 5,164 miles on club business.

During the meeting a motion supporting equal suffrage for women and making it an official subject for Federation study was brought before the convention. After a brief discussion, at which only token opposition emerged, the motion was passed. The Federation also voted into membership the Orlando Suffrage League, the state's most active suffrage organization. Other leagues soon joined making the Federation Florida's largest organization supporting suffrage. Now May could speak upon the subject, and she began to urge all clubs within the Federation to study the subject of equal suffrage. She knew that it was imperative that the women be educated to their responsibilities once they achieved the vote. She also believed that education would tend to weaken the arguments of those women who opposed equal suffrage.

During 1916 May continued to promote suffrage, the park, lands for the Seminoles, and public health. The financial plight of the park remained desperate. She tried to get a United States weather station assigned to the key, but, there was one nearby in Dade County. A statewide "mile-of-dimes" campaign was launched, in which cardboard folders, one foot in length and having slots for twelve dimes, were

distributed. The hope was that the folders laid end-to-end for one mile would bring in over $6,000. The campaign was not successful; less than $1,000 was collected. The Federation secured the services of Charles Mosier as park caretaker and he began making improvements. He had worked at "Vizcaya," James Deerings' Miami estate, and was knowledgeable about the hammock region, having explored it with Dr. Small and Dr. Fairchild. In March the Mosier family moved to the park and set up housekeeping in a tent. His letters to May were filled with accounts of bouts with mosquitoes, poisonous snakes, torrential rains, scorching heat, and grassfires. Only a hearty soul who liked what he was doing could have endured such trials.

Despite the lack of money, work on a lodge at the park was begun. Mosier also cut paths, constructed picnic tables, and guided sightseers who drove out to the park to see what all the fuss was about. May, who referred to the park as her "great hobby," continued her search for money.[20] She wrote to E.A. McIlhenny, tabasco sauce tycoon from Avery, Louisiana, about raising and selling tropical birds. She even explored the possibility of President Woodrow Wilson making the park a national monument, but to no avail. Work at the park was delayed by slowness in the paving of the Flamingo highway. Some women thought that amusement rides at the park would bring in visitors and money, but May quickly vetoed this idea. She wrote, "If they want a

merry-go-round and shoot-the-shoot let them go to the beach."[21] When funds were critically low, the old-girl network was pressed into service. Local clubwomen succeeded in securing from the Dade County Commissioners a one-year $1,200 appropriation. Several of the women were married to commissioners. With this $1,200 and money borrowed from Federation funds designated for other purposes the lodge and other improvements were eventually completed.

May spent much time also supervising the Federation's public health committee, headed by Dr. Grace Whitford of Ozona. During the year the committee sponsored the sale of Red Cross seals, a statewide "Baby Week," medical inspection of schools, the dissemination of information on communicable diseases, and health exhibits which toured on a state "health train." It also aided in the hiring of nurses in fifteen of the State's health districts. Two members of the committee served on a state commission which investigated the need for a state institution for the feeble-minded and the retarded.

Another matter that consumed much of May's time in 1916 was the development of plans to help the Seminole Indians. Ivy Stranahan, of Fort Lauderdale, was chairman of the Federation's Indian committee. She and May kept in close touch and worked to further the passage of the Sears bill in Congress which Senator Fletcher and Congressman Sears were backing. It provided for a government grant of

nearly 100,000 acres to the Indians. Factions developed over what lands to award and how they should be used. Minnie Moore Willson and others felt that only unspoiled Everglades acreage, good for hunting, should be granted to the Seminoles. May and Mrs. Stranahan, as well as the Bureau of Indian Affairs, argued that the Indians should receive drained lands that could be used for farming and grazing cattle. They also favored erection of an industrial training school for the Indians on the land. Mrs. Willson's contentiousness and threats finally alienated many people, and May broke off Federation cooperation with her.

During 1916 May continued her tours of Florida. While speaking before clubs and other groups she always talked about the park, her favorite project. As she once told Mosier, the park was special, for she "was more fond of plants and plant growth than anything in the world."[22] She began to make plans for a grand celebration at the park to take place during the convention the following year, which was scheduled to be held at Miami. Would there be anything to celebrate? The park was still woefully short of funds.

May's hectic pace continued unabated for the rest of 1916. She urged the presidents of Stetson University and the two state universities to make Spanish a requirement for graduation. She sponsored Charlotte Dye of Birmingham, Alabama, as matron of the new girls' industrial school,

before the governor and cabinet. She authored a paper entitled "Beautification of Florida Highways" which was read at the annual Florida Good Roads Association convention held in St. Augustine. She secured the Federation's endorsement of the Keating-Owens child labor bill which was pending in Congress. And, she attended the General Federation's biennial convention in New York City in June, 1916, and saw her resolution calling for beautification of the Dixie Highway passed by the group. Always an ardent gardener she was pleased when Dr. Henry Nehrling, a South Florida horticulturist honored her by naming a beautiful new hybrid amaryllis the "May M. Jennings."

The major event of the Federation's twenty-second annual convention in Miami in 1916 was the formal dedication of Royal Palm Park. On November 23 a motorcade of 168 cars, "Fords, Cadillacs, Maxwells, Overlands, and ever other kind," left Miami's Halcyon Hotel for the park.[23] Over 1,000 persons attended. May presided. After introductions and a dedication prayer, the Federation's park committee's official report was read. Then James Ingraham, guest of honor, spoke. As reported by the Miami Herald he "made a most delightful speech, telling in intimate conversational terms first of his early discovery of Paradise Key, of his talk with both Mr. and Mrs. Flagler on the subject, of the title claim made by the railroad and then most whimsically of Mrs. Jennings' attempts to have a bill put through the

legislature. . . . The difficulties in this line were depicted, the promises of legislators, the consultation with the wise old lawyer [Governor Jennings] and the last indefatigable efforts which resulted in the land being given, but not the money."[24]

The keynote address was given by Mrs. John D. Sherman of Chicago, General Federation Conservation chairman. She was followed by Dr. Charles T. Simpson who had identified and tagged the trees. He described the botanical nature of the park. Then May rose and dedicated the park with the simple words, "With the power in me vested as president of the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs I hereby dedicate this Royal Palm Park to the people of Florida and their children forever."[25]

Even though the lodge was not yet completed a picnic luncheon with turkey, ham, salad, and a cola called "Pinapola," was served on the grounds. It was a happy crowd that walked the newly-cut paths that day. Every prominent state official including the governor had been invited, but none attended. Present, however, were loyalists who had supported the park from the beginning. They included Mary and Kirk Munroe, Mr. and Mrs. W.J. Tweedell, Mr. and Mrs. Bion H. Barnett, Ivy Stranahan, Lucy Blackman, Annie Broward, Dr. P.H. Rolfs, Florence Cay, Sudie B. Wright, Dollie Hendley, Iva Sproule-Baker, Mary B. Jewett, Grace Whitford, Mrs. Harry Minium, Minerva Jennings, Mrs. E.C. Loveland, and Governor Jennings and Bryan.

After the dedication the women returned to their Miami convention and took up the matter of suffrage. After Mary Bryan addressed the women on the subject, an equal suffrage plank was endorsed and added to the legislation program. Other speakers at the meeting were Dr. E. M. Nighbert, who gave a talk on eradication of the cattle fever tick, and Bradford Knapp, state agriculture agent who talked about rural extension work. An endowment fund was established for the Federation and Stephen Foster's "Suwannee River" was recommended as the state song. In the president's report, May noted that since the last convention she had delivered forty-eight speeches, handled 5,364 pieces of mail, and traveled over 10,000 miles on club business.

The proposed 1917 legislation resolution which the women adopted contained some twenty-five items. It called for an annual state appropriation of $5,000 for the park, lands for the Seminole Indians, creation of the position of state forester and formation of special forest fire tax districts, legislative endorsement of state amendments on prohibition and equal suffrage, an act allowing women to serve on school boards, a special appropriation to the home economics department at the Florida State College for Women in Tallahassee, equal division of the state's Smith-Lever Funds, health examination for teachers, free textbooks for all school children, appropriations for the boys' and girls'

industrial schools and women members on their boards of managers, strengthening of child labor laws, a minimum wage and hour bill for female employees,a state tuberculosis sanatorium, regulation of medical advertisements, a bill outlawing public executions, one prohibiting signs and billboards on public highways, and one setting aside Alligator Bay rookery as a bird reservation. Many of these demands supported measures already advocated by the General Federation or were pending before Congress. Florida women and the Federation had come a long way from that first year in 1895 when one modest proposal of less than forty words had been submitted to the legislature. Now, even though the women could still not vote or hold office, they were a constituency to be reckoned with, and the legislature was aware of their political influence.

The Jennings spent Christmas, 1916, at their new home in Miami. Within a few months the country would be drawn into the great European war, which was to change life for everyone and add greatly to May's already overfull schedule. Characteristically, she would take on war work and give herself even more responsibilities. But for now she enjoyed her family and friends and worked on plans for the legislature in March. The Jennings would spend more and more time in Miami. Their cousins, William and Mary Bryan had a home, "Villa Serena," next to their own Brickell Avenue house; the two couples often entertained

together. Both Bryans were outspoken supporters of prohibition and equal suffrage and stumped the state on behalf of these issues. Mrs. Bryan was chairman of the Florida Equal Suffrage Association's legislation committee and a member of the Federation. The Bryan's sometime held open houses and teas at their villa to raise money for their cause. At one such event on behalf of women's suffrage, "a plate was discretely left by the door into which the thoughtful made contributions . . . Sixty-six dollars was raised and when the amount was announced, Governor Jennings promptly announced he would double the amount."[26]

The year following, 1917, began with the inauguration of Sidney J. Catts as governor and this signalled a move to the political right in Florida. While progressives remained active and did not completely relinquish their hold on state government, conservatives were gaining the initiative. Catts played both to the progressives and conservatives. Progressive reforms, which had been underway for some time, retained their momentum, but many were instituted only after strong resistance from conservative legislators. Catts' racial, moral, and religious views cast a pall over the state and created divisions which tended to polarize the people. Governor Jennings had supported James V. Knott, Catts' opponent, and both he and May were alarmed when Catts was elected. May felt uneasy about the outcome of the 1917 legislative session after Catts assumed

office, but she quickly struck up a friendship with the new governor, and tried to maintain an open mind about his administration. In turn, Catts was impressed with her when they met and wrote, "We all like you very much indeed and I am also charmed with your son whom I met."[27]

Just as supporters of equal suffrage were to be found in large numbers in the Federation, there were also prohibitionists. Many women were members of both the Federation and the Women's Christian Temperance Union. Prohibition sentiment mounted in Florida, in part as a result of Catts' tirades against "blind tigers" and sinners. May favored prohibition but she never belonged to the W.C.T.U. At the 1914 Federation convention clubwomen went on record favoring prohibition. Two years later, a stronger prohibition plank was endorsed when women who favored the subject sang a W.C.T.U. rally song; those who did not favor prohibition objected. The song, however, was very popular at the time:

Florida, Florida
Dry! Dry! Dry!
Hear us tell it.
Everybody yell it.

1917 is the day.
You help, I help.
That's the way.

We will do it.
See us try.
Line up, Florida.
Dry! Dry! Dry![28]

The state prohibitionists' organization was the only organized group that from the beginning of the women's struggle supported them in their call for equal suffrage.

Before the 1917 legislative session, May made several trips. She organized the Duval County Federation of Women's Clubs in February and then she traveled to Macon, Georgia, to address the Conference of Industry and Education of Southern Women. In New Orleans she attended a General Federation council meeting, and there delivered an address on the subject of cooperation, which she saw as a necessity if Americans were to do their part for the war effort, which began against Germany in April. May then went to Tallahassee to attend to the Federation's legislative program. She spent four weeks in the Capital.

She worked hard for the Federation's program, but the lawmakers of the 1917 session seemed more intransigent and opposed to the women than ever. The issues of prohibition and equal suffrage were major matters for debate. Despite strong pressure from the old-girl network and telegrams and letters from the Federation's rank and file, the legislators refused to fund the park, create a state forester position, or enact a law allowing women to serve on school boards. They did, however, set aside nearly 100,000 acres of Monroe County for the Seminoles, only five percent of which was arrable, create a State School Book Commission, permit the building of county-option tuberculosis

hospitals, and create a livestock sanitary board. They also passed a resolution endorsing national prohibition.

May, who stayed at the Leon Hotel, spent much time talking to legislators and appearing before committees. On weekends she traveled to Jacksonville to attend to her voluminous correspondence. She wrote, "You cannot realize what an exacting task master legislative work is . . . It is genuine hard work . . . I am worn completely out, have been before two committees on appropriation and before the Forestry committee. I am simply snowed under with work."[29]

The fight for equal suffrage was the most heated and prolonged battle of the session. May worked tirelessly along with Mary Bryan, Ivy Stranahan, and Annie Broward, all of whom were officers of the Florida Equal Suffrage Association. Mrs. Bryan addressed a joint session of the legislature on behalf of suffrage. May, Ivy Stranahan, Florence Cay, Mary Jewett, and Lena Shackleford, along with scores more of enthusiastic suffrage supporters, filled the gallery to overflowing. Mrs. Bryan was introduced by Cary Hardee, speaker of the House and no friend of suffrage. She spoke for over one hour, and at the end she received a standing ovation. It is doubtful, however, if she had been able to change the minds of many of the lawmakers, despite the fact that suffrage had won the support of several of the legislature's most respected members, including Ion Farris and Doyle Carlton, other prominent Floridians, and many of the state's largest newspapers.

"The suffragists brought two bills to Tallahassee with them. One was an equal suffrage primary bill which if adopted would permit women to vote in all primary elections and hold certain offices. The second was a resolution providing for a constitutional amendment granting equal suffrage to be submitted to the voters for ratification. Governor Jennings wrote both measures. . . . In the House, W. H. Marshall of Broward introduced the two measures. . . . Companion bills were introduced in the Senate by W. L. Hughlett of Cocoa."[30]

The legislature balked at passing the primary suffrage bill, but the state constitutional amendment resolution was reported out of committee. On April 20, debate on the bill began in the Senate. It was long and at times heated. Senators Hughlett, W. A. McWilliams of St. Augustine, James E. Alexander of DeLand, Carlton of Tampa, Farris of Jacksonville, A. S. Wells of Tallahassee, John L. Moore of DeFuniak Springs, and H. L. Oliver of Appalachicola supported the resolution.[31] John B. Johnson, president of the Senate, led the opposition. Opponents argued that if women had the right to vote, blacks would also want to vote in the Democratic primaries. Others feared that equal suffrage would destroy "home and American motherhood." Adopting both prohibition and equal suffrage in one year was just too much for some legislators. The bill was defeated by a vote of eighteen to eight. Three days later, however, the

resolution was brought up for reconsideration at a time when some of the measure's opponents were absent. The resolution passed by a vote of twenty-three to seven.[32] Supporters were jubilant. Women who had kept an around-the-clock vigil and who were seated in the gallery cheered wildly when the results were announced. The battle then shifted to the House of Representatives.

House debate was likewise vigorous. The very vocal minority was led by Hardee. After two days of debate, the measure was defeated by a margin of five votes. The following day the resolution was reconsidered but it again lost. The primary suffrage bill failed even to clear committee, and May asked to have it withdrawn. A bill favoring presidential suffrage was not even introduced. Interestingly, while these battles were going on, the legislature was passing a municipal suffrage bill which gave women the right to vote in local elections. Governor Catts signed it into law on May 7, 1917.

May was disappointed but gratified that at least the women, against great odds, had come within five votes of securing approval of a state constitutional amendment which would have granted them the franchise. For her there was victory even in defeat. She saw the effort as an event which provided Florida women with a political education and which showed them what they had to fight against. However, many suffragists, especially those in South Florida, were

not satisfied with the actions of the lawmakers or with May Jennings' leadership. Several clubs threatened to withdraw from the Federation. They blamed May for what they believed was poor judgment and of buckling under to the men by allowing the primary suffrage bill to be withdrawn. May was also attacked by the Miami Metropolis. Always the pragmatist, May explained that she had faced reality when she had withdrawn the bill; she had realized that defeat of the bill was inevitable and she had decided to cut her losses. She felt it was better to leave the legislators thinking well of the women and the Federation than to force a long drawn out, no win, confrontation.

She wrote a friend, "I am rather disgusted that all of my efforts put forth in behalf of suffrage should have been so misinterpreted. . . . I have worked very hard for the bills but felt it would be better to have all than only halfway measures. . . . It would give the men a loop hole to say they had given us something. It would make it harder for us to secure full suffrage in time to come. . . . It is much better to push and work for a better campaign for the next two years, and stir up interest in the constitutional amendment. I am frank to say there will have to be a great deal of work done among the women of Florida, and be sure there will be no representatives returned to the legislature who will not support the suffrage amendment. This means a great deal of work, if we thoroughly organize the

state, and begin at once, there is no reason why we should not succeed."[33]

Considering the atmosphere surrounding the 1917 legislative session--the country at war, a controversial new governor, and two major emotional issues--the results of the session were probably as good as could have been expected, but May was nevertheless disappointed. She was especially distressed at the failure to get the park appropriation. She wrote, "I am brokenhearted, after all our work and the promises made us . . . the House refused to let the park bill come up. I know now more than ever that women must have the vote is they are to accomplish anything. The legislature gave away thousands to themselves but the only thing asked by the women they never intended from the first to grant. . . . I am worn out with our so called wonderful lawmakers and I am beginning to think that women are fools to work as they do for the good of the world . . . the men make promises one minute and vote the other way the next."[34] In spite of the failure, May planned to resubmit her park bill to the 1919 legislature. She informed one club officer that the park committee was also thinking of submitting a bill to create still another state park on the Suwannee River, "which would of course include a great deal of the river bank."[35]

At the conclusion of the legislative session, May began immediately to make plans for another state tour.

Now, besides her responsibilities for the Federation, she had accepted new duties connected with the war. She was serving on the General Federation's war emergency committee. Herbert Hoover, head of the United States Food Administration, had appointed her to Florida's State Food Commission, an agency which was charged with publicizing the need to produce and conserve food. Governor Catts had appointed her to the Florida chapter of the Council for National Defense, to the state commission on sanitation of army and navy camps, and to the state's Library War Council, which was supposed to raise a portion of a national goal of $1,000,000. May was also in charge of organizing Red Cross volunteers from among the state's women's clubs, and she was appointed chairman of the state's Liberty Loan Drive.

Florida women engaged in all types of war work. Thousands signed pledge cards to conserve food, volunteered for Red Cross work, saved books and magazines for the armed forces camps, staffed canteens and hospitality houses for the soldiers, and sewed sweaters, muffs, and caps for the troops. They collected hundreds of pounds of string and tin foil, a practice which caused Governor Jennings much consternation and inconvenience as the stuff was stored in the Jennings' home until it could be bundled and shipped to Washington, D. C. Some Florida women objected to any German music being played at club functions. At the 1917 convention, many protested over the music committee's plans to

play selections from Beethoven, Mendelsohn, and Wagner. President Wilson himself was wired and asked for an opinion, he replied that "he did not regard the use of good music as unpatriotic."[36] One clubwoman informed May that she "went out and pulled up all of the German iris plants in her garden after war had been declared."[37]

Clubwomen were also worried about the questions of the "moral purity" and unsanitary atmosphere that surrounded the new army camps in Florida. The rise in liquor consumption and in prostitution alarmed many citizens. Camp Johnston near Jacksonville received most of the attention. May, an avowed prohibitionist and member of the state's sanitation commission, led the drive to make the area around the camp "dry." This task was eventually accomplished when the federal government declared that all camps in the nation were to be surrounded by zones which would preserve their "moral purity." May's war work soon overwhelmed her Federation duties and she wrote a colleague, "This war business has just about put me in bed."[38] By autumn she had four stenographers and six volunteers helping her with her paper work.

Of course, her regular Federation responsibilities continued; she just worked longer and harder than ever before. Planning for the new girls' industrial school in Marion County consumed a lot of her time. The Federation had submitted plans to the governor and to the state board of

control regarding the establishment of a family-style cottage system of housing like the one adopted for the boys' school. The officials ignored this concept, even though the legislature had recommended the cottage plan, and decided that a barracks-style campus would be erected. May wrote to Florence Cay: "We are in a stew about the Girl's School because the board is planning a large building with a flat roof for the school instead of the cottage plan which has been adopted. The Ocala women are up in arms. We have to see what we can do about it right away. I shall write the Governor at once."[39] After an exchange of telegrams and letters with Catts and the board members, May was informed that plans would go forward for construction of the barrack-style dormitory. Angry and frustrated, May wrote Elizabeth Hocker, an Ocala resident, "I never saw anything like this board. They seem to think they know it all, and that the fact that they are officially elected gives them unusual ability and knowledge without ever having to study a question."[40] So it was that the boys' got family cottages; and the girls' barracks.

During the summer of 1917, May outfitted the park's new lodge. She purchased linens, kitchen appliances, and furniture for the living quarters, and twelve large hickory rockers, at a cost of $2.25 each, for the screenporch. The Homestead clubwomen made braided rugs for the lodge's floors, and other clubs sent bedspreads and curtains. The

Federation had small handbills distributed throughout the state extolling the virtues of the park and the facility was now receiving visitors on a regular basis. May supervised the landscaping around the lodge, and instructed Mosier to plant roses and brilliant red bouganvilleas near the front door. Both he and May worried about grassfires which continually threatened the park and about a disease that was attacking South Florida's royal palms. This fungus eventually destroyed many of the park's palms. During September, May held a Federation board of directors meeting at the park. While there the women decorated the lodge and had their picture taken.

Other Federation committees were supervised but they did not require as much attention. Lena Hawkins, who was on the board of governnors of the Florida Good Roads Association as well as a member of the Federation's good roads committee, continued to keep the busy president amused. She wrote May, "I got a deep breath into the port ear of the chairman of our county commissioners the other night and told him that unless he got that portion of the road between here [Brooksville] and Aripeka put in shape, I would set the whole Federation on him . . . now you know he will, or I'll camp on his trail until he does."[41] The good roads committee remained one of the Federation's most aggressive groups.

Suffrage continued to be a subject of concern for many of the Federation's officers. May continued to stay in touch with Mary Jewett, and together they developed plans to make the suffrage issues a subject of formal study within every club of the Federation. May also corresponded with Ivy Stranahan, the new president of the Florida Equal Suffrage Association, and helped her make arrangements for that organization's convention to be held the same week in Tampa as the upcoming Federation convention.

The Florida Federation of Women's Clubs convened its twenty-third annual meeting in November of 1917. Convention business was primarily devoted to mobilizing the women for the war effort, electing new officers, and promoting suffrage, good roads, and public health. Rose Lewis (Mrs. Edgar Lewis), of Fort Pierce was elected president to succeed May, whose name was submitted to the General Federation as a Florida director. May was also appointed chairman of the Federation's conservation committee, a position she accepted because of her attachment to the park.

In her final address as president of the Federation, May thanked the members for their help during her three-year administration, and she listed all that had been achieved during that period. She was particularly proud of the creation of Royal Palm Park, and the construction of its facilities. She was also pleased with the endorsement of equal suffrage at two Federation conventions and its near

acceptance by the 1917 legislature, passage of a prohibition resolution, establishment of the Federation's endowment fund, creation of the girls' industrial school near Ocala, the anti-tuberculosis work which was begun in every Florida community, adoption of Red Cross work within the Federation, promotion of rural extension work, and the growth in Federation membership, now numbering more than 10,000 women. She reported that in three years she had handled 15,132 pieces of mail, had made innumerable speeches, and had traveled 26,543 miles on club business.[42] May, one of the Federation's most popular presidents ever, was given the Federation's large wooden gavel as a permanent token of esteem and appreciation. But May Jennings' service to the Federation and the state were hardly finished. New challenges lay ahead.

Notes to Chapter VII

[1]Kate V. Jackson to May Jennings, December 10, 1914. MMJ Papers, Box 4.

[2]Florence (Cay) to May Jennings, December 4, 1914. MMJ Papers, Box 4.

[3]Rose A. Lewis to May Jennings, December 8, 1914. MMJ Papers, Box 4.

[4]Tallahassee Weekly True Democrat, December 11, 1914.

[5]May Jennings to Mrs. William Hocker, January 8, 1915. MMJ Papers, Box 5.

[6]"Florida Federation of Women's Clubs," 1915. MMJ Papers, Box 5.

[7]Lena Hawkins to May Jennings, n.d. MMJ Papers, Box 5.

[8]May Jennings to Mary Coogler, February 9, 1915. MMJ Papers, Box 5.

[9]May Jennings to Elizabeth Hocker, April 5, 1915. MMJ Papers, Box 5.

[10]Lucy Lock to May Jennings, April 9, 1915. MMJ Papers, Box 5.

[11]J.A. Hendley, History of Pasco County, Florida [1941], p. 15.

[12]May Jennings to Mrs. John McGriff, April 30, 1915. MMJ Papers, Box 5.

[13]Lena Shackleford to May Jennings [May, 1915]. MMJ Papers, Box 5.

[14]Telegrams. Bryan Jennings to May Jennings, June 2, 1915; William S. Jennings to May Jennings, June 3, 1915. MMJ Papers, Box 6.

[15]Kenneth R. Johnson, "The Woman Suffrage Movement in Florida" (Ph.D. dissertation, Florida State University, 1966), passim. Johnson lists twenty-eight leagues in Florida between June, 1912, and November, 1930, p. 55.

[16]Edith Stoner to May Jennings, July 11, 1915. MMJ Papers, Box 6.

[17]L.B.E. [Mrs. R.A. Ellis] to May Jennings, August 28, 1915. MMJ Papers, Box 6.

[18]May Jennings to Mrs. T.V. Moore, September 8, 1915. MMJ Papers, Box 6.

[19]Speech, "Woman's Opportunity," FFWC Yearbook, 1915-16, pp. 26-31.

[20]May Jennings to Charles Moiser, February 23, 1916. MMJ Papers, Box 8.

[21]May Jennings to Mary Munroe, n.d. MMJ Papers, Box 9.

[22]May Jennings to Charles Moiser, April 3, 1916. MMJ Papers, Box 8.

[23]Miami Herald, November 24, 1916.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Womans Journal, XVIII, April, 1917. Quoted in Johnson, "Woman's Suffrage," p. 87.

[27]Sidney J. Catts to May Jennings, May 8, 1917. MMJ Papers, Box 10.

[28]"WCTU rally song." MMJ Papers, Box 10.

[29]May Jennings to Mrs. E.C. Loveland, May 3, 1917. MMJ Papers, Box 10.

[30]Johnson, "Woman's Suffrage," p. 210

[31]Ibid., p. 212.

[32]Ibid., p. 214.

[33]May Jennings to Mrs. T.V. Moore, May 15, 1917. MMJ Papers, Box 10.

[34]May Jennings to Marie Randall, May 30, 1917; May Jennings to Florence Cay, May 29, 1917. MMJ Papers, Box 10.

[35]May Jennings to Mrs. John D. Sherman, May 21, 1917. MMJ Papers, Box 10.

[36]Woodrow Wilson to FFWC, November 21, 1917. MMJ Papers, Box 11.

[37]Carrie McCollum to May Jennings, November 27, 1917. MMJ Papers, Box 11.

[38]May Jennings to Mrs. M.L. Stanley, July 20, 1917. MMJ Papers, Box 10.

[39]May Jennings to Florence Cay, May 26, 1917. MMJ Papers, Box 10.

[40]May Jennings to Mrs. William Hocker, June 5, 1917. MMJ Papers, Box 10.

[41]Lena Hawkins to May Jennings, June 4, 1917. MMJ Papers, Box 10.

[42]"Report of President of FFWC," November, 1917. MMJ Papers, Box 11.

CHAPTER VIII
A DEDICATED LIFE

The years following her tenure as president of the Federation were May Jennings' busiest and most successful. During the war she served on numerous state mobilization boards and committees, including the State Food Commission, National Defense Council, Library War Council, War Savings Council, Belgian Relief Committee, and the Armenian-Syrian Relief Committee. Her most diligent efforts were expended on behalf of Liberty Loan work. Prior to the end of her presidential term she had been appointed state chairman of Florida's Woman's Liberty Loan Committee and had the responsibility of organizing the women and setting up machinery for the five loan drives.[1]

Americans viewed the war idealistically, with fervor and patriotic zeal. The conflict was perceived as the battle to "make the world safe for democracy." Scores of mobilization committees urged citizens to buy war bonds, grow victory gardens, join the Red Cross, volunteer their services to hospitals and hospitality houses, save food, cloth, paper, and other commodities, and to join the armed forces. The public was exhorted to "Give Until it Hurts," and to "Beat Back the Hun." Housewives were urged to "Can vegetables, fruit, and the Kaiser, too," and to make "Every Garden a Munitions Plant."[2]

Anti-German feelings ran high and included the boycotting of German music and food. Dachunds were renamed "liberty pups," frankfurters became "liberty sausages," and sauerkraut, "liberty cabbage." The populace endured "wheatless," "meatless," "heatless," and "lightless" days.[3] Families with members serving in the armed forces hung a red and white service flag in a window of their home, with a blue star on it for each person in uniform. If servicemen died in the war, a gold star was sewn over the blue. One thousand and forty-six Floridians perished in the conflict. The Jennings family did their part in the war effort and doubled the production of vegetables, beef, and poultry on their Middleburg farm. Bryan Jennings, a recent graduate of law school, joined the navy and became an intelligence officer. He was stationed first at Washington, D. C., and then at Key West. During the conflict he married his childhood friend, Dorothy Isabel Brown.

Jacksonville, as well as Pensacola, Tampa, Miami, and Key West, was especially affected by the war. It became a ship building center of some importance, and the development of Camp Johnston, near Orange Park, brought thousands of soldiers and their families into the area. Housing shortages, economic inflation, and increases in crime troubled the community. Jacksonville became known as the "booze oasis" of north Florida. May and other prominent prohibitionists worked hard to quarantine the

military facility and to place it in a dry zone. After a bitter struggle May wrote a friend, "We had an awful fight here for the wet and dry election, but won out."[4] The "moral sanitation" surrounding Camp Johnston was attacked, too, and became an important issue among clubwomen, who under May's leadership, sent President Wilson and other government officials a resolution regarding the moral climate near the camp. During the effort to establish a zone of moral purity, May obtained for distribution pamphlets from the American Social Hygiene Association. One such pamphlet was entitled "Prostitution in its Relation to the Army on the Mexican Border."[5]

Hundreds of Jacksonville women participated in the war effort. Many volunteered to sell bonds and stamps. Others joined the Red Cross and served on its first aid, nursing, relief, and hospitality committees. Leaders of the local Red Cross branch included Louise Meigs, Annie Broward, Minerva Jennings, Ninah Cummer, Lina Barnett, and May, who was responsible for the acquisition and distribution of supplies, food, and clothing to area families adversly affected by the war. During the conflict Red Cross volunteers in Duval County made, packaged, and shipped over one million surgical items.[6] In addition to her Red Cross duties, May also served on the Jacksonville Commission on Training Camp Activities which coordinated invitations to convelescing soldiers, inviting them to partake of meals and social entertainment in private homes.

May Jennings was an excellent person to head the state's Woman's Liberty Loan Committee for she knew how to organize Florida women. She wrote at that time, "I probably know more women in the state than any other woman."[7] She and her staff sent out letters to clubwomen throughout Florida enlisting their support in the program. Non-clubwomen were solicited as well, but clubwomen proved the most ready to help and furnished the bulk of the workers. The first need was for chairmen in each of the state's fifty-four counties. In turn these chairmen had to secure assistants and scores of general volunteers. Hundreds of letters and printed pamphlets were mailed before enough chairmen could be secured to begin the work.[8] No city or hamlet was ignored. One volunteer, Etta Silverfriend, was even recruited from the Koreshan Unity community in Lee County. Most women agreed to help, but few were willing to assume supervisory tasks or take on the responsibilities of a county chairmanship. The old-girl network came to the rescue, however, and many of the Federation's state and local officers assumed county chairmanships.

Occasionally May would have difficulty organizing a county and her usual patience would run out. Then she would angrily write to those local women who had refused to participate in the loan work. To one recalcitrant group she wrote, "I must confess that it is quite a surprise to me that none of you Fernandina women seem to realize the great

importance of financing the war . . . When women are giving their sons to the trenches, it does not seem possible to me that anyone should feel they have a right to refuse a request from their government as long as they have strength to hold out. Will you kindly say to the women whom you have consulted about this work that I more often than not work until two o'clock at night. . . . The soldiers have in a way sacrificed their lives uselessly, while some women have stood idly by, unwilling to assist."[9] Many chairwomen wrote May of their difficulties in enlisting enough volunteers. To these ladies May would send cheery but humbling letters. To one she wrote, "you must not get discouraged. . . . If you had 54 counties to furnish with chairmen, you'd have something to complain of, so be thankful you have only one county to look after."[10]

May worked tirelessly throughout the war. The loan campaigns were administered out of Washington through regional headquarters. During the course of the conflict she made frequent trips to the nation's capital and to Atlanta to attend high level loan meetings. With her other club duties, in addition to her war committee work, she never seemed to have time to relax. During this period, she wrote a friend, "This war business has just about put me in bed."[11]

May also had the responsibility of arranging tours and schedules of the national personalities who came into Florida speaking on behalf of bond sales and food conservation. During the war she accompanied several speakers on

tours, including Jane Addams, of Chicago, who was a Jennings house guest. At another time she accompanied Mrs. Antoinette Funk, national vice-president of the liberty loan committee, on a swing down the Florida east coast. They visited over twenty towns. At Daytona they spoke to some 800 people, and in Miami they addressed a crowd estimated at over 3,000 in number. Everywhere they exhorted their listeners, most of whom were women, to buy bonds and to volunteer as sales persons. On another drive May accompanied Sargeant-Major Edward Lowery, a decorated English soldier, on a tour of the state. At other times she alone was the featured speaker at community rallies.[12]

Selling bonds was not without its hazards. The women, who wore identifying arm bands and buttons, canvassed every community in the state. It was tiring work, a nationwide influenza epidemic nearly cancelled the fourth loan drive, and May often had to travel to many unfamiliar out-of-the-way places. Soliciting in some parts of Florida offered its own unique perils. One county chairman wrote May, "I have just returned from Crystal River and the insects nearly ate me up. A whole regiment of German mosquitoes attacked me. Casualty list: 5 seriously wounded. The enemy were driven back with heavy losses, but I lost some mighty good American blood."[13]

Liberty Loan and food conservation work put May in contact with many black women throughout the state, and

encouraged cooperation between clubwomen of both races. She had previously corresponded with Mary McLeod Bethune, president of the Florida Colored Women's Federation, regarding public health matters. During the war she wrote her, "I am exceedingly interested in the war work among the negro women of Florida, and I have had a great deal of pleasure in cooperating with Eartha M. M. White, president of the City Federation of Jacksonville. She is an exceedingly bright and energetic women, and seems never to be weary in well doing. The colored people of Jacksonville owe her a great deal more than they realize. . . . The production and conservation of food and the elimination of waste is being pushed thoroughly and successfully among the colored women."[14] Unfortunately, racism still pervaded the South and after repeated attempts by national leaders to bring black women into the liberty loan program the idea was dropped. Cooperation between the women of the two races continued elsewhere in the nation, and May continued to correspond and work with Mrs. Bethune and Miss White and to help them organize war work among blacks. She later publically acknowledged that the black women of Florida had done much to promote the conservation of food and the buying of bonds and stamps.

Each liberty loan drive was accompanied by public rallies, parades, bonfires, band concerts, military demonstrations, and other publicity gimmicks, which the loan

people referred to as "stunts." These activities were designed to arouse the people's patriotic spirit. During the fifth and last loan drive, April 1919, May and other city leaders arranged to have the Carlstrom Flying Circus perform over Jacksonville. One contemporary remembered that the aerial team "dived, looped, rolled, and roared to simulate aerial combat as crowds took to their rooftops to get a better view, and watch open mouthed with awe."[15] In addition to the air circus, an army tank on tour was engaged to demolish an abandoned building located downtown. These two events brought one of the largest Florida crowds ever to assemble during the war. At the conclusion of the conflict May turned in her final loan report to the Washington authorities. She could be proud of the record Florida women had achieved. To their credit they had sold over $17,000,000 in savings bonds, certificates, and stamps. This was in addition to the amount which had been sold by Florida men.

During the war May's interest in other activities continued unabated. On January 24, 1917, she organized the Duval County Federation of Women's Clubs, an amalgamation of twenty-four separate organizations which over the years was to lend its united support to a number of important social and civic issues. She served as an officer of this organization for many years.[16] From 1917 to 1919 she was director of the Florida Anti-Tuberculosis

Association, and made numerous speeches throughout the state. The association sought not only to reduce the spread of the disease by improving public sanitation, but urged the establishment of a state sanatorium. In June 1917, the Jennings family attended one ceremony in Middleburg which marked the opening of the "Bryan Jennings" bridge over Black Creek, replacing the ferry which had operated there for many years. May and Governor Jennings, who were Middleburg's most prominent citizens, supported their son in his efforts to get the bridge and its opening was an important event in the history of the isolated little community.

During December 1917, May was called upon to help female telephone operators in Jacksonville who had gone on strike. She wrote Mrs. Raymond Robbins of the National Woman's Trade Union League in Chicago, and urged her to come to Jacksonville, to guide the women in their demands. She also wrote J. C. Privett, state labor inspector, and asked him for a list of industries in Florida which employed women.[17] With statistics from Privett she organized a campaign to publicize the women's plight and to get a more liberal hours and wages bill passed by the Florida legislature. Unfortunately she was not successful in her legislative effort, but she did bring the operators' working conditions to the attention of the appropriate Jacksonville officials. The telephone strike proved shortlived, but it

served to ease conditions under which the women worked. Real relief for working women would not come until federal laws were passed later by congress.

May's work on behalf of women's suffrage continued unabated. During 1918 and 1919 she and other suffragists kept pressure on Florida's congressional delegations and especially the state's two Senators, Park Trammell and Duncan Fletcher, to vote for the Anthony Amendment, the suffrage bill which was pending in Congress. Both senators adamately refused to change their antagonistic views about women's rights despite the fact that May and her colleagues launched a campaign to swamp them with, what the women called, "hot stuff" letters. After Fletcher coolly replied to one of May's "hot stuff" letters, in which she had enclosed a list of all the Florida newspapers which were supporting equal suffrage, she wrote Dr. Mary Jewett, an ardent suffragist, "the stubborness of these men makes me sick. I do not care if either is defeated. I am going to support the man who supports suffrage."[18] Dr. Jewett replied, "It will be a great day when we no longer have to have suffrage societies and political equality committees and when we are recognized as 'real folks'."[19]

When Dr. Anna Shaw, the nationally known suffragist, visited Florida on a speaking tour, May introduced her to a Jacksonville audience. May later received from Dr. Shaw a card with a picture of Susan B. Anthony. It also

contained the Anthony quote which May repeated whenever she gave a speech: "To desire liberty for one's self is a natural instinct . . . but to be willing to accord liberty to another is the result of education, of self discipline, and the practice of the golden rule."[20] During the Florida primary in June 1918, the suffragists worked openly for candidates who had supported suffrage in the past or who promised to do so in the future. May wrote of one of the candidates, "he opposed everything women asked for during the last legislature and I am anxious to see him left at home this time."[21] But not only was this candidate, George Wilder, reelected, but he served as speaker of the 1919 House.

As the controversy over the Anthony Amendment became more active both May and Governor Jennings stepped up their efforts on its behalf. During the summer of 1918 they wrote an open letter which was reprinted by the Florida Equal Suffrage Association. Copies were sent to the state's major newspapers, many of whom gave it prominent play in their pages. In November, May addressed both the FESA and the FFWC conventions on the importance of each woman doing her part to further the cause of suffrage.[22] Florida women were split between those who favored federal suffrage only and those who favored both state and national suffrage. Unity was essential, and it proved to be the missing quality which kept Florida suffragists from achieving more success. In December 1918, May issued a "white" paper written to

refute the argument espoused by Trammell and Fletcher which claimed that a vote for equal suffrage was an abdication of the principle of state rights. May denounced this view and argued that the state rights argument was a "red herring," just an excuse to oppose suffrage for women. She asked the Senators, since President Wilson and the national Democratic party had endorsed equal suffrage, did this mean that they were no longer Democrats? How could they call the United States democratic if one-half of the "nation was still without a voice?"[23]

January 1919, May, Dr. Jewett, Ivy Stranahan, and other suffragists met in Orlando to discuss the upcoming legislative session. At the meeting May delivered a speech, "The Two Roads to Victory," in which she again argued that women needed both the federal equal suffrage amendment and a state primary bill. When the Florida legislature convened a few months later, she and the other women were ready to submit their primary bill.[24] During the session they lobbied tirelessly, with May working simultaneously for suffrage as well as for bills effecting conservation, park matters, and compulsory education. The lawmakers paid little attention to the desires of the suffragists. The primary measure failed even to reach the floor of either chamber. Disheartened and discouraged the women vowed to continue to work for passage of the federal amendment. Their disappointment, however, soon changed for during that summer Congress approved the long desired nineteenth

amendment, and it was quickly ratified and made law. Neither Florida senator voted for the amendment. The Florida legislature did not endorse the historic amendment until 1966.

With the passage of the nineteenth amendment the women's movement underwent a fundamental change. Numerous new organizations whose aims were to represent women's views emerged in the new political arena. The Florida Federation of Women's Clubs, long the standard bearer, was no longer the only organization to speak for the state's women. Indeed, the Federation underwent a gradual retrenchment, and by 1930 it no longer stood as the progressive voice of the women's movement. The Florida League of Women Voters took its place. The League was organized in Palm Beach County in August 1920.[25] As a non-partisan organization, its aim was the political education of women and the exercise of pressure to achieve progressive goals.[26] The August 1920, birth of the League coincided with the date set for the first voter driver aimed at registering American women. May took the lead in Duval County, made speeches to publicize the registration drive, and worked hard organizing women to canvass neighborhoods. While, only white women were invited to partake of the new democracy, nevertheless, 7,309 Negro women, in addition to 8,702 white females, registered in the county.[27] May's friend, Helen Hunt West, a member of the radical National Woman's Party, which May

eshewed, was the first Duval County woman to register to vote.[28]

That year May was appointed associate chairman of the National Democratic Committee for Florida. Because of her longtime party connections she was also asked to organize a local Democratic Women's Club. This she did, and after an unsteady start, it eventually was incorporated.[29] This small but powerful group of women was recognized by all local leaders as an organization to be reckoned with. May served as the group's president for over nineteen years. It was readily acknowledged by those who held power and those who aspired to it that the endorsement of May Jennings was a blessing one could ill afford to ignore. May never held any political office herself, but on several occasions was offered a postmistress position which she declined. During the late 1920s many Floridians urged her to run for governor, an act which would certainly have marked her as the leading woman in the state and one far ahead of her time, despite the fact that Florida was soon to elect female legislators. Ruth Bryan Owen, daughter of William Jennings Bryan, and May's relative by marriage was one such female politician.[30] At that time May wrote a friend, "I am still having pressure brought to bear to run for Governor. It is quite flattering and complimentary but I can keep so busy without this...I think I will just pursue the even tenor of my way."[31]

In 1921 the League of Women Voters began publishing The Florida Voter, its own inhouse organ. The following year the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs established its own publication, The Bulletin, later known as the Florida Clubwoman. The League organized its own committees on child welfare, education, the legal status of women, legislation, living costs, social hygiene, women in industry, political information, and international cooperation. But, the League was different from the Federation, for it was neither as large or as pervasive as the Federation. For many years the League had chapters only in Florida's largest cities, and it never owned any clubhouses. In addition, the women of the League were interested almost exclusively in political matters. Local, social and philanthropic projects received limited attention, and not until many years later did the League concern itself with those kinds of matters.

The League also included more northern women who were relatively new to Florida, and more from minority groups. From its inception many Jewish women were members of the League. Some of the Old Federation members--May, Ivy Stranahan, May Jewett, and Lucy Blackman--joined the League but not as many as had been hoped. Some saw the League as a competitor of the Federation and opposed its aggressive stance. Just as their organization had been disapprovingly viewed by conservatives in earlier years,

so they now viewed the new League as being radical. The League lacked the air of gentility and tradition that had made the Federation so popular with southern women. May, however, did not care that the League did not meet certain social or philanthropic standards, she saw it as a viable organization with a useful future, and she became a charter member. Indeed her political experience was quickly recognized by the officers of the organization, and from its inception until 1926 she served as its chairman of legislation. She also conducted the League's citizenship school which it held during its annual convention.

As chairman of the League's legislation committee, May organized the Florida Legislative Council. It was a creature of her own imagination, an idea she believed , whose time had come. With the proliferation of organizations, old and new, all striving to satisfy their own legislative aims, May saw that much duplication of effort could be avoided if these groups could work together. She wrote, "The plan is for each organization to submit its legislative program to the council which will decide on the measures to be presented and who and how many bills to be pushed during one session. . . . The elimination of divided interests and wasted effort, the concentration of the entire force of the woman power of the state upon any measures will practically insure its enactment as a law."[32] Thus the Legislative Council, with her as president from

1921 to 1934, became a clearing house for more than ten state organizations. At its peak the Council spoke for more than 25,000 Floridians.

Represented by the Council were such disparate groups as the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs, Florida League of Women Voters, Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Florida Mother's Clubs (PTAs), Florida Education Association, Florida Forestry Association, state Women's Christian Temperance Union, and the Florida Audubon Society. Eventually, the Council was to break apart because of the strains of the Depression era and because of the desire of many of these organizations to control their own legislative calendars. But, for more than a decade the Council, with May at its helm, lobbied in Tallahassee for a common legislative program. This program always tried to include something for everyone. The 1925 program called for stricter controls over the state board of education, an act requiring the reading of the Bible in public schools, women as jurors, repression of prostitution, establishment of an industrial school for delinquent Negro girls, licensing of carnivals and traveling shows, a board of forestry, a state game and fresh water fish commission, and for local option stock laws.[33] The 1927 legislative shopping list included twenty-three items.

In addition to these issues, the League of Women Voters and the Legislative Council worked to promote state participation in the national Sheppard-Towner maternity-infancy program. They also urged a survey of conditions of Florida working women, the removal of common law disabilities on married women, and the elimination of the state's poll tax. The Legislative Council served the state well, and May Jennings became a more than ever familiar figure in the halls of government in Tallahassee.

After women received the vote May continued to promote women's rights. While she was not a member of the National Woman's Party, she nevertheless favored that organization's Lucretia Mott bill (equal rights amendment) which was rejected by the increasingly conservative Florida Federation of Women's Clubs. May continued to urge Florida women to become involved in local and state political matters. In April 1922, she wrote an article, "Women's Work in Florida," for Florida Magazine, in which she outlined the achievements of fourteen of the state's women's organizations.[34] She described the new Legislative Council and the hopes for the future; she urged all Florida women to join in the political process.

In 1925 she was appointed chairman of the women's editorial advisory committee of Tropical America magazine.[35] The magazine lasted only two years, but during that period she managed to have printed articles pertaining to Royal

Palm Park, home demonstration work, conservation of the state's natural resources, and Florida's new park system. She wrote the editor, "What I bring to the magazine in prestige, position, standing in the state, is a matter of long years attainment, and I am not unmindful of the fact that, being as conversant with state affairs as I am . . . has its great value. At least it helps me to the accomplishment of things that otherwise would be impossible. . . . The articles, I dare say, have not possibly, as much literary merit as many others could bring, but I do feel that my information as to state affairs is possibly as far reaching as that of anyone else."[36]

May continued to work for prohibition. The 1917 legislature passed a statewide prohibition bill which was ratified by the voters the following year. The eighteenth amendment was enacted in 1919, but, it soon became apparent that prohibition was going to have a precarious future. Florida, near the "wet" Bahamas, quickly became one of the major smuggling routes for rumrunners and others who sought to import illicit liquor. Citizens in Florida's coastal cities witnessed a series of battles between smugglers and state and federal enforcement officials. Late in 1919 the National Anti-Saloon League organized groups in each state to counteract the growing breakdown in respect for law and order. The Florida Educational and Temperance Campaign was established, the objectives of which were to educate the

public about prohibition, support police officials, and raise money to oppose the liquor interests, who were working to get the new amendment repealed.

The organization was supported by many women who were also members of the Federation and the Florida Equal Suffrage Association.[37] May Jennings was selected chairman of the woman's division, and was expected to call upon her vast talents and her network of friendships to find county chairwomen as she had done so often before for other organizations. However, it was not taken into account that the mood in the state and nation had changed. The war, the bond campaigns, and the struggles over suffrage and prohibition had left the American public exhausted and somewhat cynical. Americans were no longer interested in great moral causes. For two decades reformism had been the catch-word of society, now Americans were interested in other things. A conservative, pro-business mood permeated the country. Increased mobility, and greater economic freedom had created a public which no longer supported progressivism. Many Americans resented prohibition, which they viewed as a prudish law which sought to regulate their personal behavior.

May found it difficult to secure the people needed for the temperance education work. Previously cooperative clubwomen were not willing to help. One of May's stenographers wrote during the search for workers, "It seems to

me like this Education Temperance work is about the worst we have ever tackled. I never saw the way the women are afraid to accept chairmanships. . . . We will never get the state organized at the rate we are going."[38] In addition, officials at the organization's state and regional headquarters bickered among themselves over jurisdiction and expense monies. The decision to eliminate the women's division proved to be one of May Jennings' few failures. She would return later to prohibition and law enforcement matters however.

For nearly a year Governor Jennings had complained of chest pains and fatigue. As the weeks wore on his condition continued to deteriorate. During the autumn of 1919 he had an acute attack that at the time was diagnosed as severe indigestion, but apparently he had suffered a heart attack. With her husband gravely ill and bedridden, May was forced to hire around-the-clock nurses to care for him. By Christmas the prognosis was serious, and May, accompanied by friends, Dr. and Mrs. M. O. Terry, the former surgeon general of the state of New York, took the Governor to the Breakers Hotel in Palm Beach where it was thought that the warm weather would facilitate his recovery. He did improve, and in February 1920, was transferred from Palm Beach to the Ponce de Leon Hotel in St. Augustine. February 27, it was decided that he was well enough to be taken back to the Jennings home in Jacksonville. As he was

being prepared for the trip, he suffered another massive attack and died within minutes. He was fifty-six.

Governor Jennings' funeral was held in the Main Street Baptist Church in Springfield with Governor Catts, former Governor Gilchrist, and scores of other state officials in attendance. All offices in Tallahassee were closed, and flags across the state were flown at half-mast. Jennings was buried in Evergreen Cemetery, not far from his and May's home.[39]

May had never felt such grief. Even the death of her mother years before had not affected her so deeply. She had spent twenty-nine years working along side of her husband, and had shared his many dreams and aspirations for Florida and its people. Now she would have to go on alone. For several months after her husband's death she remained at her home in Jacksonville, closing out his affairs and using the time for quiet reflection. She was forty-seven years old, energetic, and too young to retire from public life. She knew that she would continue her work; there were too many things yet to be done. She wrote, "I expect to dedicate the rest of my life to the development of our beloved state to which my dear husband devoted so much of his time and thought, and I hope in a measure to be instrumental in bringing to realization some of the great things he started and dreamed for Florida."[40]

Soon after Governor Jennings' death, May as president of the Springfield Improvement Association, was asked to lead a fight which concerned something important to her. It seems that in 1919 the city commission had quietly passed an ordinance which called for the paving of Main Street and the destruction of its palm-lined esplanade. When local citizens became aware of this action the battle began. Those favoring the paving included the commission and businessmen (realtors and local car dealers) who organized themselves as the Main Street Improvement Association. May and other area residents, including Ion L. Farris, led the fight to retain the parkway. They managed to get the city council to oppose the commission, but this stand proved more symbolic than practical for real power lay with the commissioners. Mayor John W. Martin opposed the paving plan but, he too, was unable to do anything to save the esplanade.

May, Farris, and other longtime residents did everything they could to get the ordinance rescinded or delayed, but to no avail. The Springfield Improvement Association even held a non-binding referendum on the issue. During the most critical period of the struggle May urged that the city if need be remove the sidewalks but leave the scenic esplanade intact. She argued that Main Street was still a residential street and that, "back of all the agitation was a real estate scheme perpetrated by those who

had moved to palatial homes in Riverside...the people of Springfield not being willing to have Main Street's beauty destroyed in the interest of a few gentlemen who want to make money in real estate."[41]

Unfortunately, despite a battle which was carried into the courts, Springfield lost; the picturesque, palm-lined esplanade was dug up as were many of the roadway's large oak trees. Main Street became one of the city's busiest commercial thoroughfares, and next to the Jennings house there was soon a grocery store and across the street a saloon. The loss of the esplanade in front of her home proved to be one of May Jennings' sadest and bitterest defeats. Its loss spurred her to fight that much harder, however, for the preservation of other beauty spots in and around the city and state.

May's work on behalf of the national organization, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, continued, and in 1920 she was elected vice-president. Her campaign brochure for the position stated that she was a woman "born to an inheritance of big thinking and right acting who had fearlessly chosen what she believed right." It also stated that she was "a pioneer in every progressive movement in [Florida]."[42] It was a true statement. Since 1918 she had served as Florida Director to the General; now she was to assume a higher and more powerful office. After her election as vice-president she was placed in charge of the

General's national home economics demonstration extension work which operated in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. She was a familiar figure to officials of that agency because of her work with the Smith-Lever and corn club programs years before. She was a good choice to coordinate the vast program, and for two years she devoted time and energy to the project. By late 1922 she could report that thirty-nine states and 2,500 counties in the nation had established rural extension programs.

During her four years as vice-president she served the General in many ways, including membership on the committee which located, purchased, and raised over $150,000 to renovate a headquarters building in Washington, D. C. During those years she attended many important meetings in the Capital. On two occasions she and her colleagues were entertained at the White House. She also served as chairman of the General's medical loan scholarship fund, raising money to support young women who were interested in becoming doctors. In addition she served on a committee which urged Congress to create a federal department of education, with a woman as its head who would hold cabinet rank.

In 1923 May became vice-chairman of the General's Woman's National Committee for Law Enforcement, and was placed in charge of the nine southeastern states. This

appointment allowed May to continue her support for national prohibition. The position was the result of her earlier work for the defunct Florida Educational and Temperance Campaign and of her presidency of a new organization, the Duval County Law Enforcement Committee, which was formed in late 1920.[43]

Because of all of her many services to the General her name was put in nomination for president at its 1924 biennial convention.[44] She did not attain the post but was made an honorary life-time vice-president of the organization. During her years working for the General she managed to travel extensively throughout the country and spent much time in Washington. Her energy during these years was remarkable for she continued to maintain her regular schedule of city, county, and state activities.

Some of these responsibilities included helping to organize the Springfield Garden Club and a movement to clean up Springfield, beautify Hogan's Creek, and to landscape the Long Branch Creek near Evergreen Cemetery. In March 1924, May became a charter member of the Jacksonville chapter of the National Aeronautics Association which sought to further the growth of aviation in northeast Florida.[45] The group was instrumental in helping Florida Airways to inaugurate mail flights in 1926. In 1927 May attended a banquet honoring Charles Lindbergh. Despite

her interest in aviation May Jennings never flew in an airplane.

In 1925 May worked to secure passage of the bill which created the Florida State Library at Tallahassee. As a past member of the War Library Council and a former president of the Federation she was familiar with the library needs of the state. When the new library was established the Federation, at her urging, donated its ancient but large traveling library which had criss-crossed the state for so many years. These books formed the nucleus of the state's collection. May also helped to secure for the new state library the private collection of books which belonged to William Jennings Bryan.

Finally, during the early 1920s, May served as chairman of the endowment fund for the new tubercular and crippled children's hospital which was built in Jacksonville at Panama Park on Trout Creek. She also remained active on the board of Daniel Orphanage and she helped her old friend Marcus Fagg raise money for the Children's Home Society. May's was truly a dedicated life, and yet she found much that remained to be done.

Notes to Chapter VIII

[1]Ernest Ludlow Bogart, War Costs and Their Financing (New York, 1921), passim. The European war began November, 1914. The United States entered the conflict April, 1917. An armistice was signed by all parties November, 1918. The five Liberty Loan drives occurred May-June, 1917; October, 1917; April-May, 1918; September-October, 1918; May, 1919.

[2]Steve Jantzen, Hooray for Peace: Hurrah for War. The United States During World War I (New York, 1971), passim.

[3]T. Frederick Davis, A History of Jacksonville, Florida, and Vicinity, 1513-1924 (St. Augustine, 1925), p. 270.

[4]May Jennings to Kate Jackson, May 25, 1918. MMJ Papers, Box 13.

[5]Pamphlet, "Prostitution in its Relation to the Army on the Mexican Border," July, 1917. MMJ Papers, Box 10.

[6]Edith Gray, The History of the Jacksonville Chapter of the American Red Cross. World War I Period: March 20, 1914 (Jacksonville, n.d.), p. 30.

[7]May Jennings to Mrs. George Bass. February 1, 1918. MMJ Papers, Box 12.

[8]Pamphlet, "National Woman's Liberty Loan Committee Recommendations to County Chairmen." MMJ Papers, Box 12.

[9]May Jennings to Fannie D. Williams, February 11, 1918. MMJ Papers, Box 12.

[10]May Jennings to Mrs. D.E. Austin, February 1, 1918. MMJ Papers, Box 12.

[11]May Jennings to Mrs. M.L. Stanley, July 20, 1917. MMJ Papers, Box 10.

[12]Pamphlet, "A Primer of the National Women's Liberty Loan Committee for the Use of Women Speakers." MMJ Papers, Box 12.

[13]Sarah E. Sweat to May Jennings, September 21, 1918. MMJ Papers, Box 13.

[14]May Jennings to Mary McLeod Bethune, July 20, 1917. MMJ Papers, Box 10.

[15]John P. Ingle, Jr., Aviation's Earliest Years in Jacksonville, 1878-1935 (Jacksonville, 1977), p. 14.

[16]The Duval County Federation of Women's Clubs was disbanded May 14, 1965. See Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, May 15, 1965.

[17]J.D. Privett to May Jennings, April 5, 1918. MMJ Papers, Box 12.

[18]May Jennings to Mary Jewett, April 15, 1918. MMJ Papers, Box 12.

[19]Mary Jewett to May Jennings, April 11, 1918. MMJ Papers, Box 12.

[20]Postcard, Anna H. Shaw to May Jennings, October 1918. MMJ Papers, Box 14.

[21]May Jennings to Elizabeth Skinner, May 24, 1918. MMJ Papers, Box 13.

[22]Speech, "What It Would Mean to the Cause If Each Suffragist Did Her Part," November, 1918. MMJ Papers, Box 13.

[23]May Jennings, "State's Rights," December, 1918. MMJ Papers, Box 13.

[24]Speech, "The Two Roads to Victory," 1919. MMJ Papers, Box 14.

[25]Blackman, The Women of Florida, I, p. 152.

[26]Pamphlet, "The National League of Women Voters: What It Is, How It Works" [1921]. MMJ Papers, Box 17.

[27]Davis, A History of Jacksonville, p. 277.

[28]James R. McGovern, "Helen Hunt West: Florida's Pioneer for ERA," Florida Historical Quarterly, LVII (July, 1978), pp. 39-53.

[29]Alma Taylor, Secretary of DCDW, Inc., to author, December 9, 1976. DCDW, Inc., was established in 1919 and received an incorporating charter, June 29, 1935.

[30]In 1928 Edna Fuller (Mrs. John Fuller) of Orange County became Florida's first female state representative. Lena Hawkins (Mrs. C.E. Hawkins) became mayor of Brooksville in 1928. Ruth Bryan Owen became Florida's first congresswoman and served the 4th District (Miami) from 1928 to 1932.

[31]May Jennings to General M.O. Terry, February 16, 1926. MMJ Papers, Box 18.

[32]May Jennings, "Woman's Work In Florida," Florida Magazine, April, 1922, p. 14.

[33]"The Florida Legislative Council Endorses Measures," The Florida Voter, I, April, 1925, p. 11.

[34]Jennings, "Woman's Work In Florida," Florida Magazine, April, 1922, pp. 13-18.

[35]The Hollywood Magazine, published by the Florida Society of America, first appeared in November, 1924. In 1925 it changed its name to Tropical America and in 1926 became South magazine. May Jennings joined the magazine, December, 1925.

[36]May Jennings to O.E. Behymer, February 6, 1926. MMJ Papers, Box 17.

[37]For an explanation of the symbiotic relationship which existed between prohibition and women's rights movements see James H. Timberlake, Prohibition and the Progressive Movement, 1900-1920 (Cambridge, 1963).

[38]Mrs. [] Woods to May Jennings, January 30, 1920. MMJ Papers, Box 16.

[39]At the time of Jennings' death he was general counsel for the Everglades Sugar and Land Company, president of the Jennings Artesian Farm Land Company, Dade Muck Land Company, Furst-Clark Construction Company, Everglades Contractors, Bowers Southern Dredging Company, vice-president and general counsel for the Florida State Drainage Land Company, chairman of the ways and means committee of the Naval Stores Association of Florida, president of the Leesburg State Bank, Depositors Trust Company, director of Barnes and Jessup Company, and a proprietor of extensive real estate holdings in Jacksonville, Brooksville, and Miami.

[40]"Florida Director's Reports to the General Federation of Women's Clubs," March, 1920. MMJ Papers, Box 16.

[41]"Arguments in defense of Main Street esplanade." MMJ Papers, Box 16.

[42]Pamphlet, "Florida Presents a Candidate for First Vice-President," June, 1920. MMJ Papers, Box 16.

[43]The Duval County Law Enforcement Committee was established December, 1920. Scores of prominent Jacksonvillians were members including Reverend W.A. Hobson, Mrs. J.D. Alderman, Annie Broward, Charles E. Jones, Marcus Fagg, W.F. Coachman, and Mrs. J.A. Corbet. This organization promoted the enforcement of prohibition and other types of moralistic legislation. The organization disbanded in 1923.

[44]Campaign song, "May Mann Jennings." See Appendix V.

[45]Ingle, Aviation, p. 16.

CHAPTER IX
DOCTOR MAY

Through the years May never lost her abiding interest in conservation. After she relinquished the presidency of the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs she was appointed chairman of the organization's conservation department, serving from 1917 until 1938. Thus for nineteen years she was in charge of the club's Royal Palm Park, waterways, good roads, Seminole Indians, and bird protection programs. There were few conservation issues in Florida during this long period with which she was not in some way involved. She organized everything from a drive to get a riparian rights bill passed to protect the state's rivers and estuaries, to campaigns making the Mockingbird and the Sabel palm symbols of the state. She was also instrumental in having February 14 declared "Bird Day" in Florida.

Royal Palm Park continued to demand much of her time because it was always in need of money, particularly during its early years. The site became a popular tourist spot, and thousands of visitors visited there annually. It also became a place where scientists could carry on their biological and scientific studies. Improvements at the park continued to be made, a well was dug and a water

tower built. A deer pen was constructed on the premises, and several key deer were kept to entertain the sightseers. In 1918 T. L. Mead of Oviedo willed his entire collection of several thousand hybrid orchids to the park. Private monetary gifts, secured with the aid of Charles Simpson and David Fairchild, helped the park to stay solvent. The rental of some of the endowment acreage to tomato farmers also provided income, but, by late 1918 funds were so low that drastic steps had to be taken. The warden was dismissed and a part-time caretaker hired. The old "mile-of-dimes" cardboard strips were reissued to Federation members, and clubs were urged to hold bake sales and bazaars to raise money for the park. Some Federation members irritated by the perennial financial crisis at the park, began to criticize May and argue that the park should be gotten rid of.

The 1919 legislature was again asked for an appropriation. Prior to the session's opening May wrote an article about the park which appeared in Mr. Foster's Travel Magazine, a national monthly.[1] This article, which included pictures of the hammock was reprinted, and a copy was presented to each legislator. Despite intense personal lobbying by May and her committee, which was supplemented by a park display the women set up in the Capitol corridors, the legislature failed to vote funds. May was very disappointed; many of the legislators who were personal friends had assured her that the appropriation bill would pass.

Frustrated and angry, she wrote Comptroller Ernest Amos and demanded the $4.00 the state owed the park. It seems that in the original 1915 bill granting the park lands to the women the lawmakers had provided a token $1.00 a year state appropriation. During the intervening years May had never asked for the small sum, but now angry at the legislators, who she felt had betrayed her, she demanded the money. It was sent. At that time she wrote a friend, "the work [conservation in Florida] is up hill and one gets dreadfully discouraged at times."[2]

May refused to accept defeat and continued to work for the park and for other conservation projects. In 1920 she wrote the Rockfeller Foundation and tried to secure funds for the purchase of 10,000 acres adjacent to the park which she wanted to make a bird sanctuary. She was fearful that the land would be sold by the state to an industrial conglomerate interested in land speculation just as it had with the Alligator Bay rookery land the year before. At that time May had tried to prevent the sale but she had failed. She was also unsuccessful in her endeavor to secure funds to acquire the additional park acreage, but she did not give up her search for money.

In 1920 and 1921 she distributed copies of the articles "Natural History of Paradise Key and Nearby Everglades of Florida" and "Birds of Royal Palm Hammock," to prominent individuals and legislators who might aid the

park.[3] In 1920 some money was raised when she rented the Arcade movie theatre in Jacksonville and showed slides of Royal Palm. She continued to write letters of protest to state and federal officials about the lack of enforcement of existing bird and wildlife laws. Governor Sidney J. Catts was particularly recalcitrant and opposed any type of conservation measures. This did not deter May, and she continued to campaign for newer and more stringent laws. When Governor Cary Hardee took office in 1921 May sent him a long letter detailing what conservation measures she felt the state needed. She also urged him to endorse a state natural resources department. During these years she and her cohorts worked closely with the Florida Wildlife League and the Florida Audubon Society. She counted as friends many nationally known naturalists and conservation officials.

During the years of World War I, May had become embroiled in one conservation controversy which made headlines for months. Because of the emphasis during that period on the preservation of food some official in Washington suggested that sea birds be prevented from eating fish. Florida shellfish commissioner J. A. Williams then ruled that since pelicans were thought to eat perhaps a million dollars of fish a day in Florida the birds should be controlled by robbing their rookeries of eggs. Older birds were to be killed outright. The Florida Audubon

Society severely criticized Williams and other state officials who favored the plan. Naturalists were appalled by the idea that the state's pelicans should be destroyed. Feelings on both sides of the issue ran high. Stanley Hanson, a Fort Myers Indian agent and federal migratory bird inspector, wrote May, "all this talk about the pelican being responsible for the disappearance of the food fish is a lot of rot."[4] May and her conservation committee circulated petitions opposing the bird slaughter, and the National Audubon Society began to exert pressure on the United States Food Administration, which was supporting the shellfish commissioner.

May wrote her friend E. W. Nelson, chief of the Bureau of Biological Survey, in Washington for help. He and employees of the bureau visited Florida to study the situation. They prepared and sent to May an official report, "The Truth About the Pelicans," which defended the habits of the beleagured birds. May gave this paper to William F. Blackman, president of the Florida Audubon Society, and he had it retitled, reprinted, and distributed throughout the state.[5] At the time May wrote the president of the Federation, "It seems we are in for a fight to save our birds."[6] And so they were.

Coastal newspapers such as the St. Petersburg Independent condoned the destruction of the birds. May's views on behalf of the birds, however, carried a great deal

of weight around the state, for not only was she chairman of the Federation's conservation committee, but she was an officer of the Florida Audubon Society and a member of the State Food Commission, organizations on both sides of the issue. Her views were so well publicized and she herself so well respected by the general public that at a meeting of the State Food Commission, which was charged with promoting food conservation, she was able to get a resolution passed protesting the killing of Florida's pelicans. Soon the plans to exterminate the birds were dropped.

In 1921 May wrote her friend, E. W. Nelson, in Washington, to get the new caretaker at Royal Palm Park, Gordon T. Doe, appointed a deputy game warden. In the letter she acknowledged for the first time that her hard, and at times discouraging work was beginning to pay dividends, even if it was still too soom to celebrate a total victory. She wrote, "About the middle of last month I visited the Royal Palm Park and on the bridge where we go over the lilly pond we stopped our car between 5 and 6 in the evening and saw to the north on a little island belonging to our property between two and three thousand water fowl go to roost. I am beginning to feel that our bird conservation work is well started. But you can readily realize how very carefully the warden has to guard this spot. He virutally has to put the birds to bed every night to keep the hunters from shooting into them."[7]

1921 proved to be pivotal in the history of the park. For many years just May and a few staunch supporters had continued to work for the park; their efforts had aided in helping the park stay open to the public. The 1921 legislature was again presented an appropriation bill by May, who feared that the lawmakers would once again reject her appeal. Whether it was because of her reputation, or Governor Jennings' death the year before, or the fact that the park had become popular, or becuase of sheer exasperation, the legislature approved a $2,500 annual appropriation. May's dream had become a reality; the park's future was assured. The Federation retained ownership and managerial responsibilities of the site, but the state took over the financial burden. An overjoyed May Jennings wrote letters of thanks to each legislator who had voted for the appropriation bill.

Through the years she continued to oversee the operation of the park. Its popularity increased and during the Florida real estate boom in the 1920s thousands of tourists treked over its vine-covered, palm shadowed pathways. The hurricane of 1926 and several grass fires the next year caused severe damage and forced the legislature to appropriate $10,000 for restoration. Before the decade was out additional acreage was acquired, increasing the park's size to nearly 12,000 acres. In 1929, acting on behalf of the Federation, May offered Royal Palm Park to the proposed

National Everglades Park if it should be created. This was a fortuitous gesture, and in itself helped to promote the national park.

May continued to work with Ivy Stranahan on behalf of the Seminole Indians. After the 1917 legislature set aside 98,000 acres of state land in Monroe County for an Indian reservation the women began to agitate for this land to be transferred to the federal government, for it was learned that Washington would make no improvements on the reservation as long as it did not hold title to it. A memorial to this effect was presented to the 1919 legislature. In it May wrote, "if this land was under Government control steps would be taken to drain portions of the tract that could then be made available to the Indians. The only Government Indian Reservation contains about 23,000 acres in Big Cypress Swamp, Lee County, with only 5% of the land available. . . . We appeal to you to give the Indians a permanent home and settle this question for all time."[8] During maneuvers to secure the land transfer May again clashed with the acerbic Minnie Moore Willson over the philosophical question of whether hunting or farming lands were more beneficial to the Indians. May favored the acquisition of dry, arable land for the Indians. She wrote of Mrs. Willson, "I think she is more anxious for acres than for quality."[9]

It was becoming obvious that the Indians were finding it increasingly difficult to sustain themselves in the white man's world. "Because of white hunters and the development of canals, drainage operations, and highways, the supply of wildlife had been reduced to a point where deer, bear, and turkey were rarely found. Some food and virtually all other articles had to be purchased at the trading posts. Cash income came from the sale of furs, hides, dolls, baskets, and from occasional farm labor, and part-time work as hunting guides."[10] The Indians's traditional way of life was being destroyed.

The 1919 legislature was unresponsive to the request to cede the state lands to the federal government, but the women refused to give up the cause. For nearly twenty more years May, Ivy Stranahan, and other friends of the Seminoles lobbied to improve their conditions of life. In 1931 the Dania (Hollywood) Federal Reservation was established, and in 1936 additional lands in Broward County were secured for the Indians. During these years the women worked to secure not only lands, but medical care, jobs, and educational benefits for the Indians.

Other conservation issues which occupied May Jennings during these years concerned reforestation, forest fire control, cattle tick eradication, and fencing. Since its early years the Federation had been interested in forestry matters. This was because of the clubwomen's concern with

conservation in general and because some prominent women, especially in south Florida, were married to naturalists who were interested in forestry matters. Governor Jennings, in 1901, had called for a state forest conservation and reforestation program. After the creation of Royal Palm Park May's and the Federation's interest in these issues escalated. Bills were submitted to the legislature calling for the creation of a state forestry board, and the position of state forester. When the park was repeatedly threatened by forest fires, the conservation committee began an active program to get a forest fire control bill through the legislature. Eventually a bill was passed, but it provided only for weak and ineffective county option control. May led the effort to get a tougher law enacted.

Because of the Jennings' large timber holdings, Bryan Jennings was also interested in forestry matters and worked with his mother. In January 1919, May addressed the Conference of Southern Foresters in Jacksonville on the need for the creation of a state department of natural resources which would oversee a forestry board and coordinate other conservation programs. She also outlined the Federation struggles to get conservation laws enacted. As a result of this appearance she was appointed to a committee charged with organizing a state forestry organization, but it was decided that there was not enough time prior to the convening of the 1919 legislature to organize formally.

However, those who were interested in forestry matters decided to lobby for the establishment of a state forestry board and for stronger fire control measures. Unfortunately, the 1919 legislature, which passed some progressive measures failed to respond to the forestry group's requests. Shortly after the end of the session the Florida Forestry Association was formally established. B. F. Williamson of Gainesville was chosen president, Bryan Jennings vice president, and May was appointed special consultant on legislation.[11] Williamson later remembered that "Mrs. W. S. Jennings was a public spirited woman and realized the loss occurring the way forests were being handled. She at that time... conceived the idea of getting together a group to develop it into the forest service and she really sparked the flame that developed into the F.F.A." [12]

The new association dedicated itself to preserving the forests of Florida, the wildlife, and to the elimination of wildfires. The by-laws stated that the organization intended "to represent the interest of all people, the sportsmen, and the wood-using, naval stores, agricultural and horticultural industries."[13] The by-laws purposely included these sugments of the population because without their support the Association would have had a difficult, if not impossible, task achieving its goals. Chief among the organization's opponents was the cattle industry.

Cowmen had long believed that the periodic burning of range grass and undergrowth was useful in retarding scrub vegetation and rejuvenating the soil, and producing tenderer, lusher grasses. According to B. F. Williamson, "The cattle man knew when the cattle were hungry that he could drop a match and have them lucious green food in a couple of weeks."[14] Another contemporary stated that, "The first people who started fire protection and tree planting had an awful uphill fight because in Florida widespread burning of the woods was an accepted thing. It was felt that the woods ought to be burned in order to kill the boll weevil, get rid of snakes, take care of cattle ticks and almost anything else. The woods were burned in order to clear the land and to keep the pasture growth from getting too high. It was an easy thing to do, and there was no regard for the other fellow's property."[15]

Range burning to produce new vegetation was opposed by most foresters in the 1920s. Later it was more readily accepted. For years the cowmen and the foresters clashed in the halls of government and argued the question of whether "to burn or not to burn."[16] May, who was appalled by the indiscriminate burning practices of the cattlemen, argued this question frequently before various groups throughout Florida. During her talks she always advocated the proposed state department of natural resources and a forestry board. She urged cooperation with the federal

government in establishing national forest reserves in Florida and in wildfire prevention programs. State cooperation came slowly, but eventually several large preserves were established, and Florida began participating in some fire prevention programs. These efforts as May regarded them, were meager.

In 1921 May and her cohorts pushed a bill through the legislature which created fire districts in the Everglades. The following year Bryan Jennings declared for the legislature and ran on a platform calling for the establishment of a forestry board and a tick eradication program. Although defeated in the primary, he continued to work for the Forestry Association. In 1925 the group secured passage of a bill which supplemented the 1921 wildfire measure, but both were county option laws and therefore not strong enough to bring the problem under control. In 1925 the Forestry Association tried again, but without success, to secure authority to establish a state forestry board. Conservationists did achieve some victories that year, however. A bill protecting dogwoods, hollys, and mountain laurels was passed, and a bill creating a state park system under the auspices of the trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund was enacted. It would be several years, however, before any parks, other than the privately-owned Royal Palm Park, would be created.

In October, 1925 May published an article, "Conservation in Florida," in the Christian Science Monitor.[17]

In it she described the successes--game and fresh water fish department, park system, protection of the flowering trees--of conservationists in the state. In addition that year May helped Lillian Taliaferro Conway, a federal forestry expert hired by the Association, to arrange a speaking tour among Florida's women's organizations, to publicize the need for forestry laws.

From its inception the Florida Forestry Association worked to establish local forest fire protective associations in each of Florida's counties. These associations were non-governmental groups of land owners who banded together to protect their areas from wildfires and to fight such fires should they arise. The Association also lobbied in favor of the Clarke-McNary Act, enacted by Congress, in 1924, which set up a system of national and state cooperation in fire prevention, reforestation, stream flow maintenance, and forestry tax laws. The Association in 1925 published a pamphlet entitled "Common Forest Trees of Florida," and the following year, "Forest Fires in Florida." Statistics compiled by the Association showed that fires in Florida were a major problem: "In 1927, 15,646 fires were recorded, of which 15,437 occurred in unprotected areas. . . . The total number of acres burned rose to 13,260,820."[18]

In 1927 the Forestry Association returned to the legislature with a comprehensive bill which called for establishment of a state forestry board. In later years,

Clinton H. Coulter recalled, "that several of them [Association Members] camped over at the legislature and pressed the legislators by personal contact, and got the bill introduced . . . That early group beat the drums and did the spade work and lobbied up in Tallahassee to get over the bill."[19] Mr. Williamson remembered that, "We realized the cattleman was not interested in our bill and we thought it dangerous to draw one law, so we drew two laws to cover forestry protection and another to cover fire protection. The matter was presented to the legislature. This required an appropriation so a committee was appointed to the House. The authorities that appointed this committee were not favorable to forestry. I was able to go to Tallahassee and see what could be done and from every important point to study forestry and see the main man on the committee on forestry in the Legislature. This man happened to be an old lawyer and when he got through misrepresenting the situation before the committee, the bill was killed in the committee. Then the sparks began to fly. Mrs. W. S. Jennings got busy. George Pratt, President of the American Forestry Association had been down here and while he had no financial interests in the state, he did in forestry. . . . He gave us a truck and a moving picture to go all over the state and show people, so that the bill that the committee had turned down had to be accepted and was voted on by 2/3 of the Representatives of the Legislature . . .

the Department of Forestry was brought into being."[20]

At the time of the passage of the bill May wrote, "I handled the Forestry law entirely myself except for several days work done at different times during the session by my son, who is the author of the law. We are very proud of this big step in conservation for Florida."[21] Because of her leadership and lobbying and publicity work during the fight, May Jennings was often called the "Mother of Florida Forestry." She received from the American Forestry Association a bronze medallion in recognition of her activities. One friend wrote to her: "Bully for you in regard to the forestry laws. This is only one of many things you have done. I wish Florida had a half dozen of you."[22] May's friend, Governor John W. Martin, appointed Byran Jennings to the newly created board of forestry. He served for ten years (1927-1937), during which time the board established a reforestation program, worked to prevent forest fires and enforce wildfire legislation, organized the Florida Forest Service, worked with civic groups to publicize the work of foresters, and eventually helped establish a system of state parks. The creation of the Florida Board of Forestry was one of May's most significant accomplishments.

In addition to forestry matters, the Federation had always evinced an interest in the cattle industry and its problems. The Federation's first legislative resolution,

in 1895, had concerned itself with free-roaming livestock. Around 1900 the national and state governments began a public program to control the Texas cattle fever tick, which had invaded southeastern ranges. Florida's first tick eradication control bill, passed in 1899, gave all authority to the counties. In 1913 the State Board of Health was authorized to lead the eradication program, but once again real power was left in the hands of county commissions, many of whom refused to participate in the program. In 1915 the State Livestock Sanitary Board assumed the responsibility for the eradication program, but it too made little headway. As a result of the failure to eliminate the tick, the problem threatened to become a major political issue. At their 1916 Federation convention, clubwomen, aware of the impending crisis, voted to endorse a strong cattle tick eradication program. The tick affected not only the quality of Florida beef, but it was also attacking the state's dairy herds and affecting the amount and quality of the milk produced by cows. The slogan among these clubwomen became "Protect Our Babies' Milk."

By 1917 the tick problem had become so severe that most of the state was under quarantine with cattle prohibited from being shipped out. It was estimated that the range industry was losing $10,000,000 anually. Not all cowmen believed that the tick should or could be eliminated.

The Florida Livestock Association, dominated by William F. Blackman and Mrs. Potter Palmer, of Sarasota, favored a strong eradication program, while the Florida Cattlemen's Association, which was controlled by F. A. Hendry, opposed eradication. In 1918 Blackman, who was also president of the Florida Cattle Tick Eradication Committee, wrote May requesting her help in the battle. The November 1918 election was approaching and those in favor of tick control had managed to get a local-option dipping measure on all of the counties' ballots. Blackman's wife, Lucy, knew that the Federation was well organized, and he turned to her fellow clubwomen for help to promote the tick eradication program.

Cattle tick eradication was viewed by cowmen as a major economic issue; many felt dipping would drive them out of business. Jow Ackerman, in his history of the industry, says, "time involved in the actual dipping forced part-time cattlemen and farmers with sizable herds to become fulltime cattlemen or get out of the business altogether. One could no longer turn his head loose on the open range and forget about them until round-up time. . . . It was a constant cycle of hunting cattle, driving them to the vats and dipping them twice a month. And, of course, the cattle were not the only carriers of the tick."[23]

As the critical 1918 election day approached, May hurried to organize the clubwomen and help Blackman's

cause. Two other issues on the ballot at that time, a statewide prohibition amendment and a ten mill amendment designed to promote good roads, were also favored by the women. On election day clubwomen across the state took up posts outside the polling places to urge support for the three measures. Prohibition and the millage measures won handily, compulsory cattle dipping was adopted by twenty-eight of Florida's fifty-four counties.

As a result of the election progress was made against the tick, but it was apparent that without a statewide compulsory dipping law Florida would never be free, once and for all, of the vexatious problem. Proponents of tick eradication continued to work toward that end. To many citizens it appeared that a successful tick program also depended upon the fencing of the ranges, for movement of infected, as well as dipped, cattle had to be controlled. Fencing was anathema to cattlemen; open ranges had always been regarded as a sacred right. As one historian writes, "Florida was the last cattle state still to have large range areas unfenced. Fences had been around a long time, but traditionally they had been used in Florida to keep cattle out rather than to keep cattle in. . . . Cattleman J. B. Starkey remembered fondly of riding for nearly three weeks in the spring of 1914 without seeing a fence. 'There were no roads then between Alva and Sebring and the area we rode over was still for pioneers. Like all Florida cowmen, we

rode by the sun, traveling over 325 miles. It was wild country with plenty of room for a man who wanted to raise stock'."[24]

When the 1919 legislative session began the forces favoring tick eradication were prepared. Once again William Blackman solicited May's help. He wrote an open letter to each woman's club in the state, in which he said, "I am writing you after consultation with Mrs. W. S. Jennings, chairman of the conservation committee of the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs, asking that a committee be appointed immediately in every club in the state, whose duty it shall be to urge this matter [statewide compulsory dipping of cattle] upon the attention of the members of the Senate and House, in personal interviews if possible, or by letter. May we not count on you to see that this is done without delay?"[25]

In addition to Blackman's faction and the clubwomen, other groups who worked for tick eradication were the Florida Development Board and an organization with the confusing name of the Florida No-Fence League, whose primary aim was to see that all free-range or no-fence laws were rescinded and replaced by compulsory fence laws. Several Federation clubwomen were officers in this League; May was listed as an advisory member. She also at this time became a member of the Florida Development Board (forerunner of the Florida Chamber of Commerce), an association which

she maintained for the next forty years. However, May opposed linking tick eradication with fencing for she felt that to do so would add to the already abundant confusion in the public's mind and thereby jeopardize the passage of a compulsory dipping bill.

Despite continued heavy lobbying by the eradication proponents, the 1919 and 1921 legislatures refused to pass a compulsory law. This merely set the stage for an all-out confrontation between the cattlemen and their opponents at the 1923 session. After weeks of frantic lobbying and "horsetrading" between the two factions, the 1923 legislature passed Florida's first compulsory statewide dipping bill. It authorized the state to pay one-half of each cowman's dipping expenses, and placed the dipping program under a reorganized Livestock Sanitary Board. The matter did not rest there, however, for when dipping actually began in some places violent skirmishes broke out between officials and some irate, intractable cattlemen. Several individuals were killed, and numerous dipping vats around the state were destroyed. During the early years of the dipping program over 70,000 head of cattle were sold to avoid the dipping process. Eventually, dipping became commonplace, and the tick was finally eliminated, but not before the state had expended millions of dollars, suffered several more quarantine periods, and the Seminole Indians had threatened to go on the warpath to save their tick-carrying

reservation deer. During this long struggle, May and the women of the Federation strongly supported the authorities, although there was some wavering during the Seminole Indian crisis.

The no-fence proponents were not so successful. Despite their success at getting a bill to prevent loose livestock on the 1922 ballot, they were unable to rescind a single law allowing open ranges, and Florida had no statewide compulsory fence law until 1947. Some local muncipalities did not get around to adopting fence laws until the 1960s, and this despite the fact that the lack of fences became a real nuisance and safety hazard as the state expanded its road system and more and more cars took to its highways. Throughout her life May Jennings favored the passage of a compulsory fence law.

In 1922 May became associated with John B. Stetson, Jr., and the newly organized Florida State Historical Society, which had been established October 8, 1921.[26] As a member of the Florida Historical Pageant Association, producers of a 1922 open-air Jacksonville extravaganza, which depicted the Ribault-Menendez de Avila conflict in drama, song, and dance, May wrote Stetson for some pictures which the pageant could publish in its program.[27] Stetson complied with the request, and in a long letter to May outlined his plans for his new society which he urged her to join. She liked the objectives of the society--"to

further interest in the history of the state of Florida, to form a library devoted to Florida history, to acquire and preserve historical documents and memorabilia and collections of any sort referring to Florida, to foster research in early records, to publish results of such research, to render accessible scarce historical materials by facsimile of reprint,"--May became an enthusiastic booster of the society.[28] She wrote some forty-two letters to prominent friends, asking them to join also. Many accepted her invitation. Early members included Lincoln Hulley, Senator D. U. Fletcher, Peter O. Knight, Kirk Munroe, Dr. Prentice Carson, Dr. James A. Robertson, Cary Hardee, and A. A. Murphree. When the society's first publication appeared in late 1922, May's name and that of many of her friends appeared on the back flyleaf of the book as sustaining members of the organization.[29]

During this period May also became a friend of Jeanette Thurber Connor (Mrs. Washington E. Connor) who had been a co-founder of the Florida State Historical Society, and who was a resident of New York City but spent her winters in New Smyrna.[30] During one of her Florida sojourns, Mrs. Connor became interested in the ruins of an old sugar mill in Volusia County. She incorrectly identified the ruins as the remains of the Spanish mission, San Joseph de Jororo, erected 1696, and thus one of Florida's oldest surviving relics.[31] Mrs. Connor bought the "mission" and began to restore it.

Jeanette Connor and May Jennings became close friends and visited in each other's homes on many occasions. In May 1923, when May, as chairman of the state DAR's old roads and trails committee, acted as toastmistress at a banquet which celebrated the dedication of the newly erected DAR Ribault monument at Mayport, Mrs. Connor was present. The so-called "mission" of Mrs. Connor's was dedicated at elaborate ceremonies February 1926, with May, DAR and Historical Society members, and other prominent Floridians in attendance.[32]

By 1927 May had become a vice-president of the historical society. At the society's annual meeting held at DeLand, February 1927, she was given the responsibility of raising the money to save Turtle Mound, an ancient Indian midden located on the Indian River near Titusville. The mound, referred to by Mrs. Connor as a "monument to the ancient and popular institution of the picnic," was nearly 100 yards long and over 80 feet high.[33] It was being destroyed by sightseers, roadbuilders seeking shell, and fishermen, who were depleting the oyster beds which lay at the foot of the mound. Mrs. Connor had been trying to save the site since 1921 but without success. In 1924 when she urged May to help, she was told, "All this about Turtle Mound is most interesting and as soon as I can get my breath I will see what can be done."[34] By 1927 May began the campaign to save the mound. For over a year she helped raise money to buy the site. In 1928 the mound was purchased and placed under the protective custody of the

historical society. During the 1930s May made frequent visits to the site, which had been fenced off, to monitor the situation and she sought help from state authorities who had agreed to save the mound's oyster beds. Eventually the mound was deeded to the state, and it became a part of the Florida park system.

In 1929 an event occurred which caused May Jennings and others to look back on the preceding decade and her remarkable career. It had been an active ten years which had produced failure--the demise of the temperance and law enforcement organization, and the destruction of the Main Street parkway--and success--the $17,000,000 raised for Liberty Loan, the state appropriation for Royal Palm Park, establishment of a statewide cattle dipping program, passage of the bill creating the state board of forestry, and the preservation of Turtle Mound. There had been other victories too. Scores of conservation laws, a state compulsory education law, a new state library, a state maternity-infancy program, and Indian protection laws were all on the statute books. May, who had played a major role in the passage of each of these measures was now recognized as "the most widely known" and respected woman in Florida.[35]

On March 17, 1929, Stetson University conferred upon May Austin Elizabeth Mann Jennings, an honorary Doctor of Laws degree, the L.L.D. Others honored that day by the university were Florida Governor Doyle E. Carlton,

and John B. Stetson, Jr., who was at that time, United States Minister to Poland. At the ceremonies presenting the degrees, President Lincoln Hulley, of Stetson, said, when awarding May her honor, that he was conferring "the degree for distinguished service to Florida upon one who had doctored more laws than anyone else in the state."[36] It was an apt statement. Since 1906 she had been submitting memorials and bills to the legislature and "doctoring" laws. No other person, past or present, could claim such a long list of accomplishments or to have left such a personal imprint upon the history of the state. It was a glorious moment in May's long career.

Notes to Chapter IX

[1] [May Jennings], "Royal Palm State Park," Mr. Foster's Travel Magazine, XI, January, 1919, n.p.

[2] May Jennings to E.W. Nelson, September 15, 1919. MMJ Papers, Box 15.

[3] W.E. Safford, "Natural History of Paradise Key and Nearby Everglades of Florida," Smithsonian Journal 1917, pp. 337-434; Arthur T. Howell, "Birds of Royal Palm Hammock," The Auk, April, 1921, pp. 5-10.

[4] W. Stanley Hanson to May Jennings, April 22, 1918. MMJ Papers, Box 12.

[5] Pamphlet, Florida Audubon Society, "A Defense of the Pelican," 1918. MMJ Papers, Box 12.

[6] May Jennings to Rose Lewis, March 9, 1918. MMJ Papers, Box 12.

[7] May Jennings to E.W. Nelson, February 18, 1921. MMJ Papers, Box 17.

[8] Memorial, FFWC, "To the Honorable Members of the Florida Legislature, Session, 1919." MMJ Papers, Box 13.

[9] May Jennings to Ivy Stranahan, February 9, 1918. MMJ Papers, Box 12.

[10] James Covington, "Trail Indians of Florida," Florida Historical Quarterly, LVIII, July, 1979, p. 40.

[11] Williamson, who was a botanist and graduate of North Carolina State University, later served as vice-president of the United States Forestry Association. After long service to the cause of Florida forestry he is remembered as the "father of the Florida tung oil industry." For a sketch of Williamson's life see Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, August 10, 1952.

[12] B.F. Williamson, "Sketch and Reminiscenses," unpublished MS., P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History, p. 6.

[13] Pamphlet, Florida Forestry Association, "Forest Fires in Florida," December, 1926, n.p.

[14]Williamson, "Sketch," p. 6.

[15]Forest History Society, "Oral Interview with Clinton H. Coulter, State Forester, Florida Forest Service," February 6, 1958, Tallahassee, p. 6.

[16]George Dacy, Four Centuries of Florida Ranching (St. Louis, 1940), p. 149.

[17]Mrs. W.S. Jennings, "Conservation in Florida," Christian Science Monitor, October 18, 1925.

[18]Stuart Campbell, "Timber Conservation Studies in Forestry Resources in Florida," Bureau of Economics and Business Research, I, May, 1932, p. 57.

[19]Forest History Society, "Oral Interview with Clinton H. Coulter," p. 5.

[20]Williamson, "Sketch," p. 6.

[21]May Jennings to Paul G. Redington, July 21, 1927. MMJ Papers, Box 18.

[22]J.A. Robertson to May Jennings, July 30, 1927. MMJ Papers, Box 18.

[23]Joe Ackerman, Jr., Florida Cowman; A History of Florida Cattle Raising (Madison, Florida, 1976), p. 237.

[24]Ibid., pp. 227-229.

[25]William Blackman to "To The Presidents of Women's Clubs of Florida," March 22, 1919. MMJ Papers, Box 15.

[26]For an explanation of why Stetson organized a new historical society and did not join the Florida Historical Society see Watt Marchman, "The Florida Historical Society, 1856-1930," Florida Historical Quarterly, XIX, July, 1940. p. 28.

[27]Program. Community Pageant Association, Florida Historical Pagent, April 20-22, 1922.

[28]Florida State Historical Society, Charter and By-Laws of the Florida State Historical Society (Deland, 1922), n.p.

[29]Ales Hrdlicka, The Anthropology of Florida (Deland, 1922), p. flyleaf.

[30]Jean Little, "The Life and Work of Jeanette T. Connor" (M.A. thesis, Stetson University, 1933).

[31]In 1941 Charles H. Coe in Debunking the So-Called Spanish Mission Near New Smyrna Beach established conclusively that the "mission" was a sugar mill built about 1830 by the New York firm of Cruger and DePeyster. He attributed Miss Connor's error to "an honest mistake" in judgement.

[32]New Smyrna News, February 20, 1926. In addition to speeches and prayers by notables the Glee Club of Stetson University sang patriotic songs.

[33]Little, "Jeanette T. Connor," p. 26.

[34]May Jennings to Jeanette Connor, March 21, 1927. MMJ Papers, Box 18.

[35]Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, March 17, 1929.

[36]Blackman, The Women of Florida, II, p. 92.

CHAPTER X
"LOVER OF BEAUTY"

The last three decades of May Jennings' life were devoted primarily to conservation and beautification work, although she continued as president of the Legislative Council and of the Duval County Democratic Women, Inc. In 1931 the Legislative Council and the League of Women Voters worked hard for passage of a state hours and sanitation bill which they submitted after a survey conducted by the Federal Bureau of Women found that Florida women suffered from some of the lowest salaries and poorest working conditions in the country. The bill did not pass, but the two organizations continued their efforts to up-grade the life style of women. The League was particularly active in urging Florida women to play a more active role in local and state political and civic affairs.

The Duval County Democratic Women, Inc., in its early days reached a peak membership of 1,500 but declined to about 400. Through the years the organization opposed the use of "sweat boxes" in state prisons and jails, sought the purging of Duval County registration lists of names that were no longer pertinent, called for voting machines in all elections, and helped promote the passage of bills which prohibited politicking around polling

places. They also sponsored annual voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives. In 1936 the organization supported the passage of the rule change, known as the "50/50," which allowed women greater participation in the affairs of the Democratic party. As a consequence, the organization endorsed and promoted a list of Florida women who were elegible for election as delegates to the 1936 national party convention. At the time May expressed her hope "that every precinct and ward in every county and the state committee would be filled by proper representatives of our best women citizens."[1] Later that same year May was among the delegation of women who escorted Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt when she came to Jacksonville on a speaking tour.

After nineteen years as head of the organization May Jennings noted in an interview with a local newspaper reporter, "Women vote now and think nothing of it. But there was a day when they didn't and thought a great deal about it. . . . We must keep active, we stand for high class elections, but we don't endorse candidates. Instead, we endorse measures. We go out for something and fight for it." She also said that she had "fought for causes ever since I can remember."[2]

May continued her work for the Florida State Historical Society, serving as vice-president, with special responsibilities for overseeing the Connor "mission" and

Turtle Mound. In 1939 the Society merged with the Florida Historical Society, and May was no longer as active as she once had been. By that time Turtle Mound and the "mission" had been placed under the auspices of the state park system and had been designated historic memorials.

The Florida Federation of Women's Clubs and the Springfield Improvement Association continued to receive May's attention. In 1932 the SIA, later known as the Springfield Woman's Club, built a clubhouse only a few blocks from the Jennings' home. In 1954 the club celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. Through the years the organization kept a vigilant eye upon Springfield and took the lead in keeping the public buildings, schools, and parks in the area clean and in repair. The group also supported the efforts to beautify Hogan's Creek in Springfield Park. As Lucy Blackman remembered: "Some years ago Mrs. Jennings represented the Springfield Improvement Association in a campaign to beautify unsightly muddy Hogan's Creek which divides the main part of downtown Jacksonville from Springfield. The Creek winds through the city for a mile and a half before it empties into the St. Johns River. The Association under Mrs. Jennings' leadership worked 18 years before they secured a bond election for a half million dollars for the work and it took two years more before they could persuade the city commission to sell the bonds for the work. Mrs. Jennings

finally secured the engineer wanted for the work and it is now conceded the most outstanding work of its kind in the whole southeast--with its bulkhead, concrete walks and ballisters and lighting system. A bronze tablet bears the Springfield Improvement Association name and date. Mrs. Jennings was asked to dedicate the beautiful improvement and turn on the lights which she did."[3]

Through the years May continued her interest in state government. In 1942 when officials threatened to change public health policy, she submitted the following resolution to the Federation: "whereas civilian health is a paramount consideration at the present time . . . and the state has announced the intention of discontinuing public health service and units in counties of less than 25,000 population, be it resolved that the FFWC protests the discontinuance . . . and that copies of this resolution be forwarded to Governor Holland and the State Board of Health and the press."[4] The resolution, along with protests which May solicited from other organizations, prevented the cancellation of the program.

In 1928 she served as Ruth Bryan Owen's campaign manager in Owen's second bid for election to the House of Representatives. After the election May helped organize the Washington office and recommended workers for the Congresswoman's staff. The relationship between these two extraordinary women allowed May to continue the fight to preserve

the Everglades. Mrs. Owen was also an avowed conservationist, and one of her first actions in Congress was to sponsor a bill calling for the creation of a national park in the Everglades. The idea was not new, for many groups had called for it over the years, but Mrs. Owen's was prepared to fight for it on the national level. Senator Duncan U. Fletcher sponsored the bill in the Senate.

As soon as the new bill was announced, May, with the concurrence of the Federation, offered Royal Palm Park to the new national park, if and when it should be created. She also worked with other interested groups to make the park become a reality. The struggle to save the Everglades and establish a national park proved long and arduous. May and her fellow conservationists pushed bills through the 1929 legislature which laid the groundwork for the park by providing for the acquisition of state-owned lands in Dade, Monroe, and Collier counties, and for the establishment of a state Everglades Park Commission. The onset of the Depression, however, and the defeat of Ruth Owen in 1932, sidetracked the issue, and little was achieved for many years except the holding of hearings and the production of feasibility studies.

During the years many prominent Floridians and other Americans spoke out in favor of the proposed park, including Ebert K. Furlew, United States Secretary of the Interior; Gilbert Pearson, president of the National

Audubon Society; Roger Toll, superintendent of Yellowstone Park; H.C. Bumpus, of the National Park Service; and David Fairchild, Ernest F. Coe, and John K. Small. When famed landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted toured the glades on an official inspection trip, he was escorted by Coe, chairman of a citizens group known as the Tropic Everglades National Park Association. May worked with Coe's organization as well as with the Federation, the state Audubon Society, and all other groups which favored the project. In 1934 President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the bill which authorized the park, but it would be many years before the park became a reality.

During the years May continued to oversee operations at Royal Palm Park. The site registered over 20,000 visitors in 1930, but fires and devastating storms continued to wreak havoc. With the help of her son, Bryan, who was president of the state Board of Forestry, she secured a brigade of the Civilian Conservation Corp for the park. They made extensive repairs to the lodge and grounds and accomplished much fire protection work.

Governor David Sholtz, a past president of the State Chamber of Commerce, appointed May to the state's Everglades National Park Commission which had been authorized in 1929. In 1937 the other commissioners elected her to lobby the legislature for an $87,000 appropriation to provide for the commission's work. Fred Cone, the new

governor, who was opposed to the national park, agreed to sign the appropriation bill if the entire commission would first resign. He assured May that later he would reinstate most of the members. Since there was no other choice under threat of a veto May acceded to Cone's demand. After the commission resigned Cone proceeded to appoint G.O. Palmer, a friend from Columbia County, as the new chairman of the commission. Palmer allowed the commission to remain in limbo and it was claimed that he allowed the funds to be expended on relatively unimportant activities. May was enraged and embarrassed by the governor's behavior. She had made what she though was a fair political arrangement, and she felt that she had been betrayed. Thereafter she considered Cone "a double-dealer" and a dishonest man. But, Cone's tactic effectively stymied the movement to establish the park.

Despite such discouraging setbacks, May and the conservationists continued their work. World War II again eclipsed the movement, but after 1945 Governor Millard Caldwell revived the defunct commission naming May as a member. The new commission was led by August Burghard from Fort Lauderdale and John D. Pennekamp of Miami. Among the twenty-five commissioners were May's old friends Mrs. T.V. Moore, longtime Federation worker from Miami, and Harold Colee, a state Chamber of Commerce official. May, who was now seventy-four, still owned land near Flamingo,

and was designated by the governor to be the commissioner who represented the area's landowners. May immediately deeded her land to the state for the park. Pennekamp remembered May as "a most loyal commission member, who attended every meeting, took little or no part in the discussion, but invariably voted approval of all proposals."[5] When the Everglades National Park became a reality in the spring of 1947, the old Federation lodge at Royal Palm Park was utilized as the park's first visitor's center.

Ceremonies dedicating the national park were held at Everglades, Florida, on December 6, 1947. The ceremony was attended by many national and state officials and dignitaries and by more than 8,000 of the general public.[6] May was seated on the speaker's platform. Her involvement in the preservation of the Everglades was longer than any other person present. Presiding was John Pennekamp, and there were speeches by Ernest F. Coe, August Burghard, Senators Claude Pepper and Spessard Holland, Governor Caldwell, and Secretary of the Interior Julius A. Krug. President Harry S. Truman, who was wintering at Key West, flew to Everglades and delivered the keynote address. May was on the program preceding the speeches; she and Mrs. L.J. McCaffery, president of the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs, presented a plaque to Newton Drury, director of the National Park Service. The presentation

was a symbolic act giving Royal Palm State Park to the federal government. It culminated the thirty-three year fight May had waged to preserve the beauty and uniqueness of Paradise Key and the surrounding Everglades.

The Florida Times-Union that day published a long editorial summing up May Jennings' life's work:

> Everglades National Park was a permanent monument to the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs, for to this energetic organization must go most of the credit for the long and much of the time trying struggle that resulted in setting aside that portion of the Everglades area that now becomes Everglades National Park . . . the part played by the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs is recognized by the Government, as indicated by a letter received by Mrs. W.S. Jennings . . . from Newton B. Drury, director of the National Park Service. 'The donation by the Federation constitutes a major step toward the ultimate goal . . . the State Park area has been properly guarded from depredation and perpetually kept for Park purposes by the Federation as you pledged it would be in your speech of dedication on November 23, 1916.' . . . All who are familiar with the work of Mrs. Jennings will agree that a large measure of credit is due her for determination and persistence which at times bridged wide gaps of disappointment in the progress of the program. Today Mrs. Jennings, who is attending the dedication at Everglades City, declared that 'it has been a long hard fight, but the final outcome very gratifying'; with that there will be general agreement.[7]

Since her youth May had been interested in beautification work, and from the early 1920s until her death in

1963 she was the most prominent "beautifier" in Florida. Like many other movements the beautification movement seemed to have a life of its own. Beginning around 1920, it grew rapidly during that decade, peaked in the 1930s and 1940s, and gradually declined during the years after World War II. Several organizations were used to accomplish the goals of the beautifiers. The first formal garden club in Florida was organized in Jacksonville on March 25, 1922, at the Riverside Avenue home of Ninah Cummer.[8] Its membership was composed mainly of women from the Jacksonville Woman's Club. Two years later the ladies again met in Jacksonville, this time at Grace Trout's (Mrs. George W. Trout) home and organized the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs.[9] Three clubs were listed in the charter--Jacksonville, Halifax, and Winter Park. This federation grew rapidly, and within a decade there were many clubs throughout the state, each with its own individual cells, called circles. Jacksonville counted eighteen circles.[10] May belonged to the Springfield circle. The Rockledge club had a circle composed of black women known as the Magnolia circle.

The Federation of Garden Clubs became an invaluable ally of May Jennings. Other groups supporting May's beautification efforts were the Tamiami Trail Association, Dixie Highway Association, Florida Branch of the National Association for Restriction of Outdoor Advertising, Florida

Federation of Women's Clubs, and the State Chamber of Commerce. May's initial introduction into the movement came when she attended the Third annual state Beautification Convention, sponsored by the Chamber, which met in Tampa, October 1924.[11] At the convention she gave a speech on the conservation movement in Florida. In 1928 her interest in beautification work began in earnest when she and a small group met June 19, at the Jacksonville Mason Hotel.[12] The Association developed close ties with local garden clubs, the Chamber of Commerce, and other groups interested in beautification.

The State Chamber of Commerce had a long and complex history. There had been many Florida booster organizations over the years, but the immediate antecedent of the Chamber was the Tick Eradication Board established in 1916. This board was in turn an offshoot of the Southern Settlement and Development Association, which was composed of growth-minded cattlemen and lumbermen. In 1921 the Tick Eradication Board changed its name to the Florida Development Board, and in 1925 to the Florida State Chamber of Commerce. Through these formative years it was led by the same slate of officers, including Jules M. Burguierres of West Palm Beach, William L. Wilson of Panama City, A.A. Coult of Fort Myers, and A.G. Cummer of Jacksonville. May Jennings began working with the organization when it was still known as the Tick Eradication Board. By the time

it had turned into the Chamber and moved its headquarters to Jacksonville, she was one of its better known members.

For years the Chamber, the garden clubs, and others tried to get beautification and highway standards upgraded, but without too much success. As president of the Duval County Highway Beautification Association May attended the Chamber's Eleventh Annual State Beautification Convention November, 1928, in Kissimmee, and addressed the meeting with a speech entitled "Legislation for Highway Beautification."[13] It was apparent to the assembly that May was both determined and prepared. She had come with a bill on highway beautification which she presented to the convention. It later was published in Beautiful Florida, the Florida Federation of Garden Club's official journal. She wrote, "it seems quite time, although years too late in some cases, but vital to the future of the state, for higher authorities to take a decided stand and declare a definite policy in regard to road beautification and plan for rights-of-way suitable to such need. I will recommend to the Legislative Council that a definite policy be fixed by law."[14] Her bill, which had been drawn up with the help of her son, Bryan, had several sections: it mandated that a beautification expert be appointed to the State Road Department's governing board, every Florida road have a right-of-way of not less than 100 feet; all road construction be done from the center of the right-of-way outward,

and that any widening of a roadbed be uniform in nature; beautification and landscaping work reproduce the natural setting as close as practicable; at least twenty-four feet of the 100 foot right-of-way be reserved for conservation and beautification; all wire-holding poles be set back to the outer edges of the right-of-way; and county commissioners be allowed to authorize expenditures for beautification of county roads. The measure left little to conjecture or debate; like all of May Jennings' proposed bills, it was direct and to-the-point.

In 1929 May with the endorsement of Governor Doyle Carlton, submitted her bill to the state legislature. Hours of lobbying persuaded her that the bill would be passed, but it was narrowly defeated. At the time she wrote to Federation members, "You will recall that the Highway Beautification Bill was taken by me to Tallahassee with the full endorsement of the FFWC, by the Duval Highway Beautification Association, where it originated, by the State Chamber of Commerce, Gulf Coast Highway and Florida Federation of Garden Clubs. I have never handled legislation . . . that had such enthusiastic support, and still failed to become law. . . . I had two conferences with the Governor and several with Chairman Bentley. . . . It is needless to tell you that I also had to satisfy the wire, or pole using companies."[15] Utility and outdoor advertising companies were to remain opponents of May's

for many years. In 1931 she returned to Tallahassee with the bill. This time even more groups favored its passage, and without much opposition it became law. Thereafter May was regarded by many citizens throughout the state as the leader of Florida's highway beautification program.

The Duval County Highway Beautification Association became an organization with political clout and reputation. It helped Jacksonville and Duval County and was responsible for many important projects which enhanced the quality of life. It was responsible for the beautification of eighteen miles of Atlantic Boulevard from Jacksonville to the beach and sixteen miles of San Jose-San Marco Boulevard, and for the beautification of Pearl Street, Saratoga Point, and Beach Boulevard. It oversaw the landscaping of city and county sites including Imeson Airport, the Duval County courthouse, Matthew Bridge entrances, and the downtown riverfront. It also was responsible for the acquisition of DeWees Park at Atlantic Beach and the right-of-way for the road which leads to St. John's Bluff, the site of Fort Caroline National Park. Since the mid-1930s May and others were interested in establishing a national monument to commemorate the landing and settlement of Ribault. It was not until the election of Charles Bennett to Congress that the Fort Caroline National Park became a reality.[16]

The Duval County Highway Beautification Association also turned an unsightly dump along Long Branch Creek and

marsh in north Springfield, into a fifty-acre park, which when complete was named Jennings Park, in May's honor. In addition the Association, with the aid of local garden clubs, oversaw the planting of thousands of flowers, trees, and shrubs along the county and city roadways. Many of the projects were completed with FERA, CWA, WPA, and PWA funds. Through the years the Association received many accolades. In 1958, May's last year as its president, it was cited by the General Federation of Women's Clubs and the Sears-Roebuck Foundation as one of the nation's most successful beautification groups.

With the Hogan Creek-Springfield Park project and the passage of the highway beautification bill of 1931 behind her, May's reputation as the state's leading exponent of beautification was further enhanced by succeeding Karl Lehmann, as chairman of the State Chamber of Commerce's beautification committee. She held this position for over twenty-five years. May hoped to organize beautification auxiliaries in each community which had a Chamber of Commerce. Over the years these local committees helped establish scores of local parks and beautified many buildings and roadways. In 1936 May served on the board of governors of the Southern Woman's Digest, a magazine devoted to women's interests which was published in Jacksonville. The magazine lasted only one year, but during that time she published several articles pertinent to conservation

and beautification. In one, "God's Own Garden," she described Royal Palm Park.[17] In another she wrote of Florida's beaches and advocated the opening to the public of all state beaches, "Our beaches must be declared to be state reservations or parks under the protection of the state. . . . Florida women must realize the value of Florida's beaches . . . and through local Chambers of Commerce, civic and social groups strive for a 'closed season' on Florida's coastline" which is being fenced off for private use.[18] Shortly after this article appeared she proposed that the state legislature enact a law calling for the protection and beautification of the state's waterways and beaches, but the measure did not pass.

With the outbreak of World War II in 1941 the beautification movement was forced to operate at a reduced pace. Most projects were geared to beautifying the grounds in and around Florida's many military installations. At Cecil Field in Jacksonville May personally oversaw the erection and landscaping of a flagpole plaza on the quadrant in front of base headquarters. During the conflict she made her own personal contribution to the war effort by opening her Springfield home to roomers, to help ease Jacksonville's critical housing shortage. Many contemporaries recall the small, neat sign, "JENNINGS," which hung from her front porch during those days. In 1943 she participated in the christening of the 10,500-ton liberty

ship the S.S. W.S. Jennings. Members of the family and city officials attended the ceremony, at which Thomas B. Adams gave an address about the career of Governor Jennings. Then May christened the ship with the words, "May this liberty ship prove as sea worthy, sturdy, strong, and dependable as the man was, whose name it is it bear."[19]

After the war a resurgence of the beautification program took place. With Americans more mobile than ever thousands of tourists began to visit the state. In Florida several memorial highways were beautified in memory of the state's war dead, including a section of the Old Spanish Trail (U.S. 90) from Monticello to Tallahassee, known as the Blue Star Highway; the highway between Tallahassee and Thomasville, Georgia; and a section of Highway 301 which began at Clermont and extended south through the Florida ridge for more than sixty miles. These and scores of other such projects were coordinated by May's State Chamber of Commerce beautification committee.

During the 1950s Florida joined the national Keep American Beautiful campaign. For nearly a decade each September was designated as "Florida Beautification Month." During this month May and her committee coordinated the beautification mobilization effort which took place among hundreds of Florida garden and women's clubs, chambers of commerce, and beautification associations. Every few years, under the auspices of May's committee, these

organizations met in convention. One such meeting was held in 1954.[20] Over 300 Floridians devoted a day to discussing anti-litter campaigns, law enforcement problems, and public education issues. That same year May began to lobby for a bill calling for the creation of a division of landscaping within the State Road Department, but the bill was rejected by the legislature.

In 1956 the State Chamber of Commerce dedicated a new headquarters building in Jacksonville. May supervised the landscaping which included the installation of sabel palms and flowering trees on the grounds.[21] In 1959 she was a special guest when the William R. Kenan Floral Gardens were dedicated on the building's lawn.[22] In 1961 May resigned as head of the committee. She was now eighty-eight years old, but before her resignation she agreed to oversee one last "Florida Beautification Month" effort. The Florida Times-Union wrote: "If while driving this month in the family car you see a lovely lady out planting flowers and shrubs along Florida's highways, it's a good bet her name will be Mrs. W.S. Jennings. . . . She is the hardworking chairman of the State Chamber's Beautification Committee. Since September is Beautification Month in Florida, Mrs. Jennings and her co-workers are extremely busy making the Sunshine State pretty for its winter guests. So when you see Mrs. Jennings out planting this month, stop and give her a hand to make Florida a more beautiful state."[23]

After May's retirement she received a plaque from the State Chamber of Commerce inscribed with a resolution of gratitude for her years of service.[24] She was made an honorary member of the beautification committee and an honorary life member of the Chamber. By now May had become used to receiving honors. In 1955 she was named the Springfield Woman's Club outstanding citizen, and the following year the Jacksonville branch of Soroptimist International named her "Woman of the Year."[25] She had been honored at a University of Florida Centennial convocation program in Gainesville in 1953, with a medal for meritorious service as one of Florida's most outstanding leaders.[26] In 1961 the University named a female residence hall in her honor. In the building hangs a bronze plaque upon which is inscribed the words:

> May Austin Mann Jennings
> A civic leader and wife of William Sherman Jennings, made her own outstanding contributions to the life and growth of this state as a pioneer in highway beautification and park development. The progress of Florida forestry owes much to her dedicated interest.27

In 1961 May Jennings contracted cancer and retired from all civic activities. Her son and daughter-in-law moved into her home to care for her. She died quietly at her home in Jacksonville on April 24, 1963, the day before her ninety-first birthday with her son at her bedside. Her funeral was held at Riverside Park Methodist

Church where friends, including Eartha M.M. White, Chamber of Commerce officials, and members of the Springfield Woman's Club paid their respects. She was buried next to her husband in Evergreen cemetery. The Florida Times-Union, in editorial, noted her passing and asked, "Who will step forward to take her spade?"[28]

The legislature of the state of Florida issued that day a concurrent resolution expressing deep sympathy and regret over her passing. In the resolution it was stated, "The people of the entire state of Florida mourn the loss of a warmly dedicated woman of rare charm, intelligence and leadership of the highest order who built an enviable record of good works, NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA, THE SENATE CONCURRING: That on behalf of the people of Florida this legislature does unanimously express its deep and earnest sense of regret and heartfelt sorrow at her untimely passing."[29]

In 1963 a few months after her death May Jennings was awarded a Chair of Business in the State Chamber of Commerce's Florida Hall of Achievement. On November 12, 1966, the State Road Department in cooperation with the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs erected a highway marker on U.S. Highway 17, near Yulee, where U.S. Highways 1 and 301 enter the state. The marker bears the inscription "In memory of MAY MANN JENNINGS lover of beauty."

Notes to Chapter X

[1]Southern Woman's Digest, I, April, 1936, p. 2.

[2]Unidentified newspaper clipping, June 21, 1945. In possession of Dorothy Jennings Sandridge.

[3]Blackman, The Women of Florida, II, p. 96.

[4]Mrs. Fred Noble, Florida Federation of Women's Clubs: Jubilee Issue (Jacksonville, 1946), p. 85.

[5]John D. Pennekamp to author, August 27, 1974.

[6]Miami Herald, December 7, 1947.

[7]Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, December 6, 1947.

[8]Yearbook, Jacksonville Garden Club, Founder's Circle, 1926-27, n.p.

[9]Ella G. Alsop, History of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs (Jacksonville, 1943), n.p.

[10]Ibid. In 1958 the Jacksonville Garden Club was the largest club in the United States with 146 circles.

[11]Beautiful Florida, I, November 1924, p. 3.

[12]Duval County Highway Beautification Association Constitution and By-Laws, 1928, n.p.

[13]Beautiful Florida, V, November, 1928, p. 4.

[14]Ibid., V, March, 1929, p. 15.

[15]The Florida Bulletin, IX, August, 1929, p. 4.

[16]In an interview with the author, November 5, 1979, Representative Bennett recalled that May Jennings was politically adroit, had a calculating mind and never had an "axe to grind," but was enjoyable to work with.

[17]Southern Woman's Digest, I, April, 1936, p. 6.

[18]Ibid., p. 4.

[19]Unidentified newspaper clipping dated July 26, 1943. In possession of Dorothy Jennings Sandridge.

[20]Florida Business Review and Outlook, XIII, August, 1954, p. 1.

[21]Ibid., XV, December, 1956, p. 1.

[22]Ibid., XVIII, February-March, 1959.

[23]Quoted in Florida Business Review and Outlook, XX, September, 1961, p. 4.

[24]Ibid., XXI, February, 1962, p. 1.

[25]Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, October 24, 1956.

[26]Program, Centennial Convocation, Recipients of Awards (University of Florida, 1953).

[27]Dedication plaque, May Mann Jennings Hall, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida.

[28]Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, April 26, 1963.

[29]"House Concurrent Resolution, No. 1196, Expressing Deep Sympathy and Regret Over the Passing of May Austin Mann Jennings." In possession of Dorothy Jennings Sandridge.

APPENDIX I
"BEYOND THE ALPS LIES ITALY"

Kind Friends,

There are occasions when silence is more eloquent than words, when we are surrounded by circumstances in which, it would seem mockery to attempt to give utterance to our feelings. Such are the emotions which arise in our souls, as we stand before you today, to take our final farewell.

We have been as wayfarers among you seeking for treasures in distant lands and in our search for knowledge we have been separated from those who are near and dear to us, but, in the gloom which, at times, overspread our days of search, we were encouraged by the thought that "Beyond the Alps Lay Fair Italy" our beloved home and that at a future day, the highest peak would be reached and laden with treasures we would return to our homes.

Ours has frequently been a weary struggle for, in the rugged paths, how often has the shadow of discouragement disturbed our efforts! How often has the phantom of glory tried to lead us astray! How often, too, have we fallen when we thought ourselves secure, and with bleeding hearts lay amid the rocks; but, cheered on by the

hope of one day arriving at the top of the Alps we arose and continued our work.

Having at last, climbed one by one the rocky cliffs, and having come in sight of our friends and home, we rejoice and fondly arranging the treasures sought and found, we look upon them and with the poet, consider them "things of beauty, hence, joys forever."

Among the many rare and precious stones which we have gathered on our weary journey across the Alps, our labor has been rewarded by the possession of the Garnet, emblematic of constancy and fidelity; we have also found the Bloodstone, symbolical of wisdom, courage and firmness; procured the peerless Diamond of faith and innocence, and secured the Sapphire of virtue and truth: these are the most precious among our collection of gems; these complete our casket.

Although we were happy in finding our earnestly sought treasures, yet, we often grew sad and sighed for home, but, we were encouraged by the kind and reassuring words of our esteemed guides, for whom we have formed strong attachments. Our associates, too, have grown dear to us--and as we greet each other today perhaps to meet no more, and as the blithsome notes of happy school day songs are echoed among the heights, the key notes of memory are touched, and their sweet but mournful strains force the

tear drops to dim our eyes "ere we summon the courage to say farewell."

For looking backward from the craggy heights, the scene is well calculated to move every chord and to open up the vista of the past; we gaze with pleasure mingled with pain on the dear old classroom and recreation hall, where hand-in-hand we worked and played together, and "the social smile of every welcome face, will in fond memory ever hold a place."

Nor is the chapel hidden, where low before our Lord we made known our little wants; to all these we must bid adieu, but in days to come happy memories will call forth the aspiration,

Oh! friends regretted,
scenes forever dear,
Rememberance hails you
with her warmed tear!
Drooping she bends oer
pensive Fancy's urn,
To trace the hours
which never can return
Yet with the retrospection
loves to dwell,
And soothe the sorrows
of her last farewell!

May A. Mann

June 26, 1889

APPENDIX II
LIST OF PRESIDENTS OF FFWC, 1895-1920

1895-1897, Mrs. P.A. Borden Hamilton, Village Improvement Association, Green Cove Springs.

1897-1888, Mrs. N.C. Wamboldt, Town Improvement Association, Fairfield (Jacksonville).

1899-1901, Mrs. J.C. Beckman, Woman's Town Improvement Association and Cemetery Association, Tarpon Springs.

1901-1903, Mrs. W.W. Cummer, Woman's Club, Jacksonville.

1903-1905, Mrs. Lawrence Haynes, Woman's Club, Jacksonville.

1905-1906, Mrs. Richard F. Adams, Woman's Fortnightly Club, Palatka.

1906-1908, Mrs. Charles H. Raynor, Palmetto Club, Daytona.

1908-1910, Mrs. Thomas M. Shackleford, Woman's Club, Tallahassee.

1910-1912, Mrs. A.E. Frederick, Woman's Club, Miami.

1912-1914, Mrs. William A. Hocker, Woman's Club, Ocala.

1914-1917, Mrs. W.S. Jennings, Woman's Club, Jacksonville.

1917-1919, Mrs. Edgar A. Lewis, Woman's Club, Fort Pierce.

1919-1921, Mrs. J.W. McCollum, 20th Century Club, Gainesville.

APPENDIX III
LIST OF CLUBS IN FFWC

Part I: 1905

Date of Entry	Club
1895	Village Improvement Association, Green Cove Springs
	Village Improvement Association, Tarpon Springs (changed to Cycadia Cemetery Association)
	Village Improvement Association, Crescent City
	Village Improvement Association, Orange City
	Village Improvement Association, Fairfield
1896	-----
1897	Palmetto Club, Daytona
	Literary and Debating Club, Melrose
	Avilah, Rockledge
1898	Woman's Club, Jacksonville
	Woman's Fortnightly Club, Palatka
	Village Improvement Association, Ormond
1899	-----
1900	-----
1901	Housekeepers, Cocoanut Grove
1902	-----
1903	Village Improvement Association, San Mateo
1904	Current Events Club, Live Oak
	20th Century Club, Gainesville
	New Century Club, High Springs
	Village Improvement Association, Lake Como
	Woman's Club, Fort Myers
	Current Events Club, Tampa
	Married Ladies' Afternoon Club, Miami
1905	-----

Part II: 1914

State Section I [Citrus, Sumter, Lake, Hernando, Polk, Desoto, Hillsborough, Manatee, and Lee Counties]

Civic League	Arcadia
Woman's Club	Auburndale
Woman's Club	Brooksville
Woman's Club	Bradenton
Mother's Club	Clearwater
Woman's Club	
Alpha Sorosis	Dade City
Woman's Civic Club	
Woman's Club	Eustis
Woman's Club	Fort Myers
Woman's Club	Lakeland
Woman's Club	Leesburg
Woman's Club	Manatee
Ladies Village Improvement Association	Ozona
Fortnightly Club	Punta Gorda
20th Century Club	Ruskin
Woman's Club	St. Petersburg
Woman's Town Improvement Association	
Woman's Club	Sarasota
Civics Association	Tampa
Woman's Club	
Woman's City Club	
Cycadia Cemetery Association	Tarpon Springs

Civics Club	
Woman's Club	Wildwood
Civic League	Wachula
Civic League	Winter Haven

State Section II [Jefferson, Madison, Hamilton, Columbia, Baker, Nassau, Taylor, Suwannee, Bradford, Lafayette, Alachua, Levy, and Marion Counties]

Woman's Club	Dunnellon
Ladies Civic League	Fernandina
20th Century Club	Gainesville
New Century Club	High Springs
Village Improvement Club	Hawthorne
Woman's Club	Jasper
Current Topic Club	Lake City
Woman's Club	Lawtey
Woman's Club	Live Oak
Woman's Club	Madison
Woman's Club	Mayo
Woman's Club	Ocala
Woman's Club	Perry
School and Civic Club	Starke

State Section III [Escambia, Santa Rosa, Walton, Holmes, Washington, Bay, Jackson, Calhoun, Liberty, Franklin, Gadsden, Wakulla, and Leon Counties]

Woman's Club	Panama City
Civic League	Pensacola
Woman's Club	Tallahassee

State Section IV [Duval, Clay, St. Johns, Volusia (part), and Putnam Counties]

Village Improvement Association	Crescent City
Palmetto	Daytona
Woman's Club	Deland
Village Improvement Association	Federal Point
Village Improvement Association	Green Cove Springs
Fairfield Improvement Association	Jacksonville
Ladies' Civic Improvement Club of Riverview	
Ladies' Friday Musicale	
Springfield Improvement Association	
New Springfield Woman's Club	
Pan-Hellenic Association	
Woman's Club	
Woman's Club	Orange Park
Village Improvement Association	Ormond
Woman's Club	Palatka
Ladies Village Improvement Association	San Mateo
Book Club	South Jacksonville
Woman's Club	
Woman's Civic League	St. Augustine
St. Cecilia Club	
Village Improvement Association	Welaka

State Section V [Volusia (part), Seminole, Orange, Brevard, Osceola, St. Lucia, Palm Beach, Dade, and Monroe Counties]

Woman's Club	Boynton
Public Library Association	Cocoa
The Folio	Cocoanut Grove
Housekeepers	
Woman's Club	Fort Lauderdale
Woman's Club	Fort Pierce
Woman's Club	Homestead
Ladies' Civic Association	Key West
Woman's Club	Lakeworth
Woman's Club	Miami
The Mothercraft Club	
Woman's Club	Melbourne
Woman's Club	New Smyrna
Village Improvement Club	Orange City
Sorosis	Orlando
Woman's Civic League	
Ladies Civic Improvement Club	Pompano
Woman's Club	Sanford
Woman's Club	Stuart
Progressive Culture Club	Titusville
Entre Nous	West Palm Beach

APPENDIX IV
ANNUAL CONVENTIONS OF THE FFWC, 1896-1919

	Date	Location
first organized	1895 (Winter)	Green Cove Springs
1st	1896 (Winter)	Green Cove Springs
2nd	1897 (Winter)	Jacksonville
3rd	1898 (Winter)	Daytona
4th	1899 (Winter)	Jacksonville
5th	1900 (Winter)	Palatka
6th	1901 (Winter)	Daytona
7th	1902 (Winter)	Crescent City
8th	1903 (Winter)	Ormond
9th	1904 (Winter	Jacksonville
10th	1905 (Winter)	Miami
11th	1906 (Winter)	Tampa
12th	1906 (Autumn)	Tallahassee
13th	1907 (Autumn)	Gainesville
14th	1908 (Autumn)	Live Oak
15th	1909 (Autumn)	Palatka
16th	1910 (Autumn)	Ocala
17th	1911 (Autumn)	Jacksonville
18th	1912 (Autumn)	West Palm Beach
19th	1913 (Autumn)	Orlando
20th	1914 (Autumn)	Lakeland

	Date	Location
21st	1915 (Autumn)	Deland
22nd	1916 (Autumn)	Miami
23rd	1917 (Autumn)	Tampa
24th	1918 (Autumn)	Daytona
25th	1919 (Autumn)	St. Petersburg

APPENDIX V
CAMPAIGN SONG FOR MAY MANN JENNINGS

Sung at GFWC biennial convention Los Angeles, June, 1924.

May Mann Jennings
(to the tune of Auld Lang Syne)

Should work and merit be unsung
or unrewarded stay?
Then praise the splendid worthiness
And merits of our May.

May Jennings for our President
Achievement, charm and cheer
To carry on the Winter's work
The fruitful Maytime's here.

Her record stands for all to read
Performance through and through
A tale of work and victory
Of lotfy dreams made true.

May Jennings for our President
Achievement, charm and cheer
For every law and plan we need
Make her the engineer.

North and South and East and West
One womanhood we stand
And loyally uphold the best
For home and native land.

May Jennings then for President
Achievement, charm and cheer
Her splendid service let us crown
With faith and vision clear.

In her our hopes and dreams are safe
Our seeking meets an end
Her past is ours, our future hers
Hail, Champion and Friend.

May Jennings then for President
Achievement, charm and cheer.
From coast to coast we pledge our faith
To the Maytime of the Year.

From the Florida Bulletin, III,
No. 8, May, 1924.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Papers

Jennings, May Mann Papers. 19 Boxes, P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History, Gainesville, Florida.

Jennings, William Sherman Papers. 28 Boxes, P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History, Gainesville, Florida.

Mann, Austin Shuey Papers. 3 Boxes, P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History, Gainesville, Florida.

Newspapers

Brooksville The Hernando News, July 25, 1891; August 22, 1891.

_____ News Register, January 23, 1895.

_____ Sun, June 27, 1952; November 28, 1952.

Christian Science Monitor, October 18, 1925.

Daytona Gazette-News, June 22, 1901.

Deland Volusia County Record, May 17, 1900.

Eustis Lake Region, September 5, 1901.

Gainesville Daily Sun, June 11, 1901.

Jacksonville Dixie, November 8, 1912.

_____ Florida Times-Union, April 9, 15, 29, 1900; May 6, 27, 1900; June 18, 19, 20, 22, 24, 1900; September 5, 20, 21, 1900; September 13, 1901; December 13, 1912; March 1, 30, 1913; March 17, 1929; December 6, 1947; February 12, 1950; March 25, 1951; August 10, 1952; July 10, 1955; October 24, 1956; May 23, 1964; May 15, 1965.

_____ Metropolis, February 28, 1906; July 23, 1906; November 15, 1906;March 16, 1907; April 13, 1907; November 22, 23, 27, 1907; February 10, 1908; April 20, 1908; December 19, 1908; January 6, 27, 1909.

_____ Sun, December 2, 1905.

_____ News, August 12, 1892.

Lake City Citizen-Reporter, January 11, 1901.

Miami Herald, August 7, 1913; November 24, 1916; December 7, 1947.

New Smyrna News, February 20, 1926.

New York American, December 18, 1902.

Palatka Advertiser, April 30, 1900.

Sanford Herald, undated.

Tallahassee The Daily Capital, December 5, 1901; May 13, 1903.

_____ Daily Floridian, April 12, 1891; May 14, 1891.

_____ Weekly Floridian, April 8, 1891; May 27, 1891.

_____ Weekly True Democrat, December 11, 1914.

The Weekly Tallahassean, January 10, 17, 1901; May 23, 1901; October 25, 1901; August 1, 1902; July 17, 1903; August 7, 1903.

Tampa Sunland Tribune, October 20, 1882.

_____ Times, May 10, 1900.

_____ Tribune, May 28, 1900.

Unidentified. July 26, 1943; June 21, 1945.

Periodicals

Beautiful Florida, I, November, 1924.

_____, V, November, 1928.

_____, V, March, 1929.

El Figaro, XVIII, June, 1902.

The Florida Bulletin, IX, August, 1929.

Florida Business Review and Outlook, XIII, August, 1954.

_____, XV, December, 1956.

_____, XVIII, February-March, 1959.

_____, XX, September, 1961.

_____, XXI, February, 1962.

Florida Magazine, I, November, 1900.

_____, IV, March, 1902.

Florida School Exponent, III, December, 1900.

_____, XVII, June, 1910.

The Florida Voter, I, April, 1925.

Pascua Florida, II, May, 1889.

_____, II, June, 1891.

_____, XIV, February, 1903.

Southern Woman's Digest, I, April, 1936.

Sunnylands, A Florida Monthly Magazine, III, August, 1901.

Woman's Journal, XVIII, April, 1917.

Miscellaneous Sources

Prospectus. Prospectus of St. Joseph's Academy, St. Augustine, 1890.

Minutes. Minutes of the Eigth Annual Convention of the Florida Sunday School Association, Ocala: Banner Steam Printing and Publishing House, 1889.

Program. Florida Historical Pageant, Jacksonville: Community Pageant Association, 1922.

Program. Souvenir zum Verbandsfest, 1907.

Yearbook. The Woman's Club of Jacksonville, 1897-98, Jacksonville, 1897.

Yearbook. Florida Federation of Women's Clubs, 1915-16, Jacksonville, 1915.

Yearbook. Young Women's Christian Association, 1912-13, Jacksonville, 1912.

Charter and By-Laws. Florida State Historical Society, Deland, 1922.

Interviews

Bennett, Congressman Charles. November 5, 1979, Jacksonville, Florida.

Jennings, Dorothy Brown. July 27, 1978, Penney Farms, Florida.

Sandridge, Dorothy Jennings. June 8, 1978, Orange Park, Florida.

Personal Communications

Hightower, Elizabeth Bell to author, July 2, 1978.

Pennekamp, John D. to author, August 27, 1974.

Municipal, State, and Federal Records

Florida Legislative Directory, 12th Session, 1883.

Florida Legislative Directory, 1903.

Jacksonville City Directory, Jacksonville: R.L. Polk and Co., 1912.

Laws of Florida, 1907, Chapter 5686, No. 91.

Miami City Directory, 1919.

Miami City Map, 1918.

St. Augustine City Directory, St. Augustine: Chapin and Co., 1884.

United States Census, 10th, Florida, Hernando County, 1880.

Theses and Dissertations

Akin, Edward Nelson. "Southern Reflections of the Gilded Age: Henry M. Flagler's System, 1885-1913" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, 1975).

Alberta, Sister Mary. "A Study of the Schools Conducted by the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Diocese of St. Augustine, Florida, 1866-1940" (M.A. thesis, Universith of Florida, 1940).

Blair, Karen Jane. "The Clubwoman as Feminist: The Woman's Culture Club Movement In the United States, 1868-1914" (Ph.D. dissertation, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1976).

Carper, Gordon N. "The Convict-Lease System in Florida, 1866-1923" (Ph.D. dissertation, Florida State University, 1964).

Cory, Lloyd Walter. "The Florida Farmer's Alliance, 1887-1892" (M.A. thesis, Florida State University, 1963).

Dalton, Jack P. "A History of Florida Baptists" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, 1952).

Johnson, Kenneth R. "The Woman Suffrage Movement in Florida" (Ph.D. dissertation, Florida State University, 1966).

Little, Jean Edkin. "The Life and Work of Jeanette T. Connor" (M.A. thesis, Stetson University, 1933).

McGoldrick, Sister Thomas Joseph. "The Contribution of the Sisters of St. Joseph of St. Augustine to Education, 1866-1960" (M.A. thesis, University of Florida, 1960).

Pavlovsky, Arnold M. "We Busted Because We Failed: Florida Politics, 1880-1908" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1973).

Price, Margaret Nell. "The Development of Leadership by Southern Women Through Clubs and Organizations" (M.A. thesis, University of North Carolina, 1945).

Journal Articles

Atkins, Emily Howard. "The 1913 Campaign for Child Labor in Florida," Florida Historical Quarterly, XXXV (January, 1957), 223-240.

Campbell, A. Stuart. "Timber Conservation," Studies in Forestry Resources in Florida, I (May, 1932), 5-113.

Covington, James W. "Trail Indians of Florida," Florida Historical Quarterly, LVIII (July, 1979), 37-57.

Dovell, James E. "The Railroads and the Public Lands of Florida, 1879-1905," Florida Historical Quarterly, XXXIV (January, 1956), 236-258.

Goerge, Paul S. "A Cyclone Hits Miami: Carrie Nation's Visit to the Wicked City," Florida Historical Quarterly, LVIII (October, 1979), 150-159.

Howell, Arthur T. "Birds of Royal Palm Hammock," The Auk (April, 1921), 5-10.

Jennings, May. "Royal Palm State Park," Mr. Foster's Travel Magazine, XI (January, 1919), n.p.

_____. "Woman's Work in Florida," Florida Magazine (April, 1922), 13-18.

Knauss, James O. "The Farmer's Alliance in Florida," The South Atlantic Quarterly, XXV (July, 1926), 300-315.

Marchman, Watt. "The Florida Historical Society, 1856-1940," Florida Historical Quarterly (July, 1940), 3-65.

McGovern, James R. "Helen Hunt West: Florida's Pioneer for ERA," Florida Historical Quarterly, LVII (July, 1978), 39-53.

Safford, W.E. "Natural History of Paradise Key and Nearby Everglades of Florida," Smithsonian Journal, 1917, 377-434.

Strickland, Alice. "Florida's Golden Age of Racing," Florida Historical Quarterly, XXXXV (January, 1967), 253-268.

Williamson, Edward C. "Independentism: A Challenge to the Florida Democracy of 1884," Florida Historical Quarterly, XXVII (July, 1948), 131-156.

_____. "The Constitutional Convention of 1885," Florida Historical Quarterly, XLI (October, 1962), 116-126.

Unpublished Manuscripts

Colburn, David and Richard K. Scher. "Florida Gubernatorial Politics in the Twentieth Century." Unpublished MS., 1980. In possession of the authors, University of Florida, Gainesville.

Divine, R.A. "The History of Citrus Culture in Florida, 1565-1895." Unpublished MS., 1952. P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History, Gainesville.

Forest History Society. "Oral Interview with Clinton H. Coulter, State Forester, Florida Forest Service." Unpublished MS., 1958. P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History, Gainesville.

Langford, Jr., John Q. "Senator Austin S. Mann." Unpublished MS., 1950. P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History, Gainesville.

Williamson, B.F. "Sketch and Reminiscences." Unpublished MS., undated. P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History, Gainesville.

Books

Ackerman, Jr., Joe. Florida Cowman, A History of Florida Cattle Raising. Madison, Florida: Jimbob Printing, Inc., 1976.

Barbour, George M. Florida for Tourists, Invalids and Settlers. New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1882.

Barrs, John M. Some A.D. 1900 Democratic Platforms in Florida. Jacksonville: East Florida Printing Company, 1900.

Blackman, Lucy Worthington. The Women of Florida, 2 vols. Jacksonville: Southern Historical Publishing Associates, 1940.

Blakey, Arch Fredric. Parade of Memories, A History of Clay County, Florida. Jacksonville: Clay County Bicentennial Steering Committee, 1976.

Bogart, Ernest Ludlow. War Costs and Their Financing. New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1921.

Brinton, David B. A Guidebook of Florida and the South for Tourists, Invalids, and Emigrants. Jacksonville: Columbus Drew, 1869.

Brooksville Board of Trade. A Book of Facts for Those Seeking New Locations in the South. Chicago: J.P. Black and Co., 1909.

Caldwell, A.B., editor. Makers of America: Florida, 5 vols. Atlanta: The Florida Historical Society, 1911.

Cash, William T. The Story of Florida, 4 vols. New York: The American Historical Society, Inc., 1938.

Coe, Charles H. Debunking the So-Called Spanish Mission Near New Smyrna Beach. Daytona Beach: Fitzgerald Publications, 1941.

Croley, Jennie June. The History of the Woman's Club Movement in America. New York: Henry G. Allen and Co., 1898.

Crosby, Oliver Marvin. Florida Facts. New York: Oliver Marvin Crosby, 1887.

Dacy, George H. Four Centuries of Florida Ranching. St. Louis: Britt Printing Co., 1940.

Davis, T. Frederick. A History of Jacksonville, Florida and Vicinity, 1513-1924. St. Augustine: The Florida Historical Society, 1925.

_____. The Narrative History of the Orange in the Florida Peninsula. Jacksonville: T. Frederick Davis, 1941.

Dunn, Hampton. Back Home: A History of Citrus County, Florida. Inverness: Citrus County Bicentennial Steering Committee, 1978.

Eppes, Susan Bradford. The Negro of the Old South. Chicago: Joseph G. Branch, 1925.

Fifield, Letty M. History of Jacksonville YMCA. Jacksonville: The Miller Press, 1950.

Garwood, Harry C. Stetson University and Florida Baptists. Deland, Florida: Florida Baptist Historical Society, 1962.

Gray, Edith. The History of the Jacksonville Chapter of the American Red Cross, World War I Period: March 20, 1914-November 16, 1920. Jacksonville: Edith Gray, n.d.

Hanna, Alfred J. and Kathryn A. Hanna. Lake Okeechobee, Wellspring of the Everglades. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1948.

Harrison, Benjamin. Acres of Ashes. Jacksonville: J.A. Holloman, 1901.

Hawks, J.M. The Florida Gazetteer. New Orleans: Bronze Pen Steam Book and Job Office, 1871.

Hendley, J.A. History of Pasco County, Florida. Dade City: J.A. Hendley [1941].

Hrdlicka, Ales. The Anthropology of Florida. Deland: Florida State Historical Society, 1922.

Ingle, Jr., John P. Aviation's Earliest Years in Jacksonville, 1878-1935. Jacksonville: Jacksonville Historical Society, 1977.

Jantzen, Steve. Hooray for Peace: Hurrah for War. The United States During World War I. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971.

Jennings, W.S. "Florida's Public Lands," in Legislative Bluebook, 1917. Pat Murphy, comp. Tallahassee: T.J. Appleyard, 1917.

Jones, James H. History of Brooksville City Government. Brooksville: James H. Jones, 1965.

Key, Jr., V.O. Southern Politics in State and Nation. New York: Random House, 1949.

Koenig, Louis W. Bryan: A Political Biography of William Jennings Bryan. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1971.

Living Waters. St. Augustine: Sisters of St. Joseph, 1966.

May, Judge E.C. Gaters, Skeeters, and Malary: Recollections of a Pioneer Florida Judge. New York: Vantage Press, 1953.

Noble, Mrs. Fred. The Woman's Club of Jacksonville, Golden Jubilee Issue, 1897-1947. Jacksonville: 1947.

Paisley, Clifton. From Cotton to Quail: An Agricultural Chronicle of Leon County, Florida, 1860-1967. Gainesville: The University of Florida Press, 1968.

Proctor, Samuel. Napoleon Bonaparte Broward: Florida's Fighting Democrat. Gainesville: The University of Florida Press, 1950.

Quinn, Jane. The Story of a Nun: Jeanie Gordon Brown. St. Augustine: Villa Flora Press, 1978.

Russell, E.R. Brooksville As I First Knew It. Brooksville: E.R. Russell, 1962.

Scott, Anne F. The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970.

Stanaback, Richard J. A History of Hernando County, 1840-1975. Brooksville: Action '76 Steering Committee, 1976.

Timberlake, James H. Prohibition and the Progressive Movement, 1900-1920. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963.

Williamson, Edward C. Florida Politics in the Gilded Age: 1877-1893. Gainesville: The University of Florida Press, 1976.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Linda Darlene Moore Vance was born in Fort Worth, Texas, August 9, 1938. A fifth-generation Texan, she attended public schools in Corpus Christi. Higher educaton was pursued at The University of Texas at Austin. She received a bachelor's degree in History from The University of Houston in 1964. From 1964 to 1967 she was a research assistant at the Humanities Research Center, University of Texas. She is married to Dr. John M. Vance, Professor of Mechanical Engineering. They have four children. Mrs. Vance has authored and presented several professional papers in her field. She is a member of Phi Alpha Theta, history honorary society, Florida Historical Society, and Texas History Society.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Samuel Proctor, Chairman
Distinguished Service Professor
of History

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Lyle N. McAlister
Distinguished Service Professor
of History

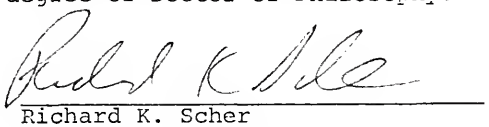
I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

C. John Sommerville
Associate Professor of History

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

George Pozzetta
Associate Professor of History

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



Richard K. Scher
Associate Professor of Political Science

This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Department of History in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate Council, and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

August, 1980

Dean, Graduate School

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
3 1262 08666 370 4